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"Literary Criticism & the
Personal Essay"

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LAOKOON

AND

HOW THE ANCIENTS REPRESENTED DEATH

BY

GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM LESSING

LONDON
G. BELL AND SONS, LTD.
1914

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INTRODUCTION.

Though there is no writer whose works may be more advantageously studied as a whole than Lessing's, there are few of equal importance who are known in this country in so partial and fragmentary a manner. Various translations of 'Nathan der Weise' and 'Minna von Barnhelm' have, it is true, exhibited him fairly enough as a dramatist of pure style, refined humour, and liberal thought; at the same time another class of readers has had more than one opportunity of studying the treatise on the 'Laokoon,' and admiring his vigorous and suggestive style of criticism and wide scholarship, which must always give it a literary interest whatever substantial value may be assigned to it. But such an acquaintance with isolated pieces hardly allows a reader to estimate their real value, and still less does it afford him an opportunity of co-ordinating the positions of Lessing the dramatist and Lessing the critic, and forming any definite notion of his true place in literary history. To do so demands in any case some general knowledge of German literature, but whilst Goethe and Schiller have become duly appreciated in this country, their great precursor has, amongst general readers, been little more than a name to those who were even so far acquainted with him. Two interesting biographical works by Mr. James Sime and Miss Helen

Zimmern have, no doubt, done much to dispel this ignorance, and paved the way for a wider study of Lessing's own work, and the publication in Bohn's Libraries of a translation of all his completed dramas, has given English readers an opportunity of estimating his merits for themselves in this particular path of literature. But inasmuch as these dramas, a large proportion of which were composed in his youth, are very far from representing the substance of his more mature work, a selection, at least, from his prose writings, in which of course the 'Laokoon' must be included, is absolutely necessary to give any adequate notion of Lessing's achievements.

The main bent of his mind was essentially critical, and this fact is sufficient to account for the modified degree of recognition which he has met with. A critic merely as such cannot be a popular writer, and the necessity that the results of his labours, so far as they are effective, must be appropriated and absorbed by succeeding writers has a further tendency to limit the duration of any fame that he may have acquired on the score of them. That Lessing, notwithstanding this, is known as the author of some pieces that are in the truest sense popular is due to qualities not strictly critical, or necessarily coexistent with the clear insight and independence of mind which forced him to analyze afresh and probe to its depths any subject that came within his intellectual grasp. It is the faculty of invention to which are due such creations as Nathan, Minna, or von Tellheim, and the strong infusion of personal character which gives to his didactic writings the charm of essays, whilst they have the weight of treatises, that constitute his claims to popular appreciation.

But whilst Lessing is thus preserved from classification in the unattractive if not unfruitful order of minds that are "nothing if not critical," it is no less a fact that his

animating motive in almost all he wrote was a distinctly critical purpose. Though we may not accept literally the modest estimate of his own powers which he has given at the close of the 'Hamburg Dramaturgy,' we are forced to admit that he regarded such a purpose as conducive to all good writing. "To act with a purpose," he says, "is what raises man above the brutes; to invent with a purpose, to imitate with a purpose, is that which distinguishes genius from the petty artists who only invent to invent, imitate to imitate." This may appear at first sight difficult to reconcile with the dictum of a greater inventive genius if a less profound theorizer, with whom modern critics at any rate will be more disposed to agree. Goethe has said, "a good work of art may and will have moral results, but to require of the artist a moral aim is to spoil his work."[2] It is true that he here speaks of a distinctly ethical purpose, whilst Lessing's statement may be coloured by the particular occasion, the criticism of one of Marmontel's Tales applied to a dramatic purpose, which called it forth, and that it is modified by limitation to the chief characters of such a work; but the two propositions no less indicate a wide opposition in the points of view from which a work of art may be conceived of. Without entering further into the question, it is enough to say that Lessing approached all æsthetic subjects in an attitude of mind which, while thoroughly independent and natural, erred, if it did so at all, in the stringency of its requirements.

Such a frame of mind was well suited to the time in which he lived, if indeed it may not be said to have been produced by it. He found his country with a language excelling in force and individuality, but with no literature worthy of it—and adopting in default a foreign literature not only

[2] Dichtung und Wahrheit, ii. 112.

unsuited to the character of its people, but also aiming at false æsthetic ideals. The French tragic writers, whose stilted masterpieces were naturally repugnant to an unsophisticated and undrilled Teutonic mind, were also found wanting when weighed in their own balance, inasmuch as they evaded and perverted the spirit of the formal rules, the letter of which they pretended to observe. Many pages of his dramatic criticisms are devoted to this subject. He directs the ponderous ordnance of Aristotelian argument against such delinquencies with a crushing energy of which they seem to us unworthy. But it is not easy for us to appreciate the circumstances under which he then wrote, or the almost religious zeal awakened in him by the condition of German culture in the middle of the eighteenth century. "If Lessing," says a liberal-minded French writer, "has been harsh and sometimes unjust towards our literature, it is because he was zealous to destroy from amidst his people the fetishism, as it were, in which they were enwrapped, and to give to German literature its free course."[3] It is this zeal which makes him so much more than a critic, a term which we generally associate with something that is cold if not repellent. His style has the aggressive energy of a prosecutor rather than the deliberation of a judge, even when it is not avowedly polemic, and well justifies the appellation of "the great gladiator," which has been applied to him. "Solet Aristoteles quærere pugnam in suis libris," he takes occasion to quote, and in this temper he advises the critic to "search for some one from whom he can differ," as the readiest method of vindicating his theories.

In respect to ancient art Lessing was no less an earnest thinker than on literature, but he had here no such definite field. His speculations were moreover limited by

[3] Ernest Fontanes' *Etude sur Lessing.*

the fact that he had no technical acquaintance with the subject; he dealt only with its literature and history, a fact which must not be overlooked in considering his treatise on the 'Laokoon.' But on the other hand the field was a fresher one; no such master mind as Aristotle's had formulated the principles of the plastic arts, and the misconceptions to which he opposed his acute analysis were prevalent wherever the fine arts were held in any estimation.

These considerations ought to provide against the 'Laokoon's' being judged from too high a standpoint in art. It was confessedly a fragmentary composition; a second and a third portion were contemplated by Lessing. But even had he carried out his whole plan, it would as a detailed criticism have treated of only a segment of what we now comprehend in the term fine arts. That Lessing practically limits his definition of beauty to that of form, that he ignores the pleasing influence which may be exercised on the mind by colour, that he expressly depreciates the work of the landscape-painter, and that he takes insufficient cognizance of the powerful effect of religion upon art, might tell against his claims, if he had made any, to be an expositor of art, but they ought not to be urged in derogation of a treatise which professed to deal with plastic art from one point of view, namely in its correlation with descriptive poetry. These deficiencies may prove that he was no practical artist, that he had little or no knowledge of Italian painting, that in fact he unconsciously limited his observations to that aspect of art of which alone he was competent to speak—they do not invalidate his criticisms within the limits thus imposed. Fragmentary or imperfect as it may be considered as a treatise upon art, the 'Laokoon' is not the less a masterly example of the application of inductive reasoning to æsthetics. The important principle that it demon-

strates, the recognition of limits beyond which the artist and the poet cannot safely venture, is one that is applicable to any other field of art, and the great effect which the work always produces on first reading is perhaps due not only to the clearness with which it enforces this principle, but also to the wide application of which its reasoning appears to be susceptible.

It has been pointed out more than once that Lessing was in some measure indebted to other writers, particularly to the Abbé Dubos,[5] for some of the leading ideas in his work: but the largely increased value which such portions of the treatise have acquired by their incorporation in a developed æsthetic theory, has amply justified Lessing's appropriation of them. The real originality of the work as a whole is patent, and the profound interest excited by it in minds most qualified to form a just estimate of it is the strongest proof of its merits. A book which filled Goethe when a Leipsic student with enthusiasm, unreservedly endorsed in later life,—which Herder read three times through in a single afternoon and night, and from which Macaulay, as he told the late G. H. Lewes, learned more than he ever learned elsewhere, is one of which there is no room to question the intrinsic worth.

On the other hand it may be said that the very cogency of its reasoning, and the obviousness of the truths as enunciated by it, have placed it out of date, inasmuch as its principles, recognized at once, have become the common property of all later writers. As Adam Smith's 'Wealth of Nations' to the political economist, so is the 'Laokoon' said to be to the critic,—a work which did much in its day, but the modern value of which is chiefly historical and literary. This would be true enough were the function

[5] Réflexions critiques sur la Poésie et la Peinture, 1719.

of criticism confined to those who were duly qualified for it, but in these days, when criticism has become a trade which every journalist feels called upon to practise, it is more than ever important that some of the fundamental principles which should guide it should be enforced. The fact that the leading idea of Lessing's treatise, the limitation and distinctiveness of the spheres of art and poetry, is continually ignored even in quarters where special qualifications are looked for, is sufficient reason for its reassertion.

That many passages in the treatise might, so far as educational purposes are concerned, be advantageously modified or enlarged upon, may be taken for granted, but such a process would involve also the omission of many of Lessing's notes which have a purely literary or antiquarian interest, and consequently obliterate some of its most characteristic features. But inasmuch as the first object of the present publication is to assist as far as may be in illustrating Lessing's literary character, a contrary plan has rather been adopted, and the translation, which is not a new one, has been revised, with the object of making it as accurate a representation of the original as possible. And of all his works the 'Laokoon' is perhaps the one best calculated to display the writer's character, so far as a single one can do it, in its various phases. Though professedly a critical essay on an abstract subject of speculation, it abounds in personal traits, characteristic phraseology, and happy illustration, displaying a mind singular in the extent and accuracy of its knowledge. Whilst not avowedly polemical, it exhibits frequent symptoms of that combative tendency which showed Lessing at his happiest when he was tearing to shreds the errors of some ill-starred offender against consistency or common sense; whether his adversary were dead or living made little difference, for Lessing's animus had

no infusion of malice or personal spite. "Wide in soul and bold of tongue" as he was, his simple object was the vindication of the cause of truth. His hatred of charlatanism and his uncompromising insistance on what he holds to be right may be less forcibly illustrated in the 'Laokoon' than it is for instance in some passages of the 'Hamburg Dramaturgy'; but this moderation of tone rather adorns than obscures those features which have an especial attraction for us. For "it is to Lessing," says Carlyle, "that an Englishman would turn with readiest affection. As a poet, as a critic, philosopher, or controversialist, his style will be found precisely such as we of England are accustomed to admire most; brief, nervous, vivid; yet quiet, without glitter or antithesis; idiomatic, pure without purism, transparent, yet full of character and reflex hues of meaning."[6] It is to be recollected, too, that he was one of the earliest of continental writers to appreciate and assert the value of English literature, and that in endeavouring to purify that of his own country, he did much for the credit of ours.

Such intellectual fellowship is strengthened by the sympathy that the story of his hardly fought but uncomplaining life cannot fail to excite, and must surely entitle him to no less esteem from us than the vital services which he rendered to German literature have gained for him amongst his own countrymen.

The translation of the 'Laokoon' in this volume is substantially that of Mr. E. C. Beasley, formerly of Wadham College, Oxford, published in 1853, the merits of which have been generally acknowledged. For this edition it has been subjected to a complete and careful revision with the object of making it as accurate and literal a representation of the original as possible. A synopsis of its contents, which it is hoped will be found useful in a careful study of the work, has also been prefixed.

The essay on "How the ancients represented Death," which has a close connexion with a portion of the 'Laokoon,' is translated by Miss Helen Zimmern (author of 'Arthur Schopenhauer; his Life and his Philosophy,' and 'G. E. Lessing; his Life and his Works').

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LAOKOON

OR

ON THE LIMITS OF PAINTING AND POETRY.

Ὕλῃ καὶ τρόποις μιμήσεως διαφέρουσι·
Πλουτ. πότ. Ἀθ. κατὰ Π. ἢ κατὰ Σ. ἐνδ.

WITH COLLATERAL ELUCIDATIONS OF VARIOUS QUESTIONS IN THE HISTORY OF ANCIENT ART.

The greater part of Laokoon was written during Lessing's residence at Breslau, 1760–65. He completed and published it at Berlin in 1766 in the hope of furthering his candidature for the post of Royal Librarian, which however it failed to secure for him.

PREFACE TO LAOKOON.

The first person who compared painting and poetry with one another was a man of refined feeling, who became aware of a similar effect produced upon himself by both arts. He felt that both represent what is absent as if it were present, and appearance as if it were reality; that both deceive, and that the deception of both is pleasing.

A second observer sought to penetrate below the surface of this pleasure, and discovered that in both it flowed from the same source. Beauty, the idea of which we first deduce from bodily objects, possesses universal laws, applicable to more things than one; to actions and to thoughts as well as to forms.

A third reflected upon the value and distribution of these universal laws, and noticed that some are more predominant in painting, others in poetry; that thus, in the latter case, poetry will help to explain and illustrate painting; in the former, painting will do the same for poetry.

The first was the amateur, the second the philosopher, the third the critic.

The two first could not easily make a wrong use of either their feelings or conclusions. On the other hand, the value of the critic's observations mainly depends upon the correctness of their application to the individual case; and since for one clear-sighted critic there have always been fifty ingenious ones, it would have been a wonder if this application had always been applied with all that

caution which is required to hold the balance equally between the two arts.

If Apelles and Protogenes, in their lost writings on painting, affirmed and illustrated its laws by the previously established rules of poetry, we may feel sure that they did it with that moderation and accuracy with which we now see, in the works of Aristotle, Cicero, Horace, and Quintilian, the principles and experience of painting applied to eloquence and poetry. It is the privilege of the ancients never in any matter to do too much or too little.

But in many points we moderns have imagined that we have advanced far beyond them, because we have changed their narrow lanes into highways, even though the shorter and safer highways contract into footpaths as they lead through deserts.

The dazzling antithesis of the Greek Voltaire, "Painting is dumb poetry, and poetry speaking painting," can never have been found in any didactic work; it was an idea, amongst others, of Simonides, and the truth it contains is so evident that we feel compelled to overlook the indistinctness and error which accompany it.

And yet the ancients did not overlook them. They confined the expression of Simonides to the effect of either art, but at the same time forgot not to inculcate that, notwithstanding the complete similarity of this effect, the two were different, both in the objects which they imitated and in their mode of imitation (ὕλη καὶ τρόποις μιμήσεως).

But, just as though no such difference existed, many recent critics have drawn from this harmony of poetry and painting the most ill-digested conclusions. At one time they compress poetry into the narrower limits of painting; at another they allow painting to occupy the whole wide sphere of poetry. Everything, say they, that the one is entitled to should be conceded to the other; everything that pleases or displeases in the one is necessarily pleasing or displeasing in the other. Full

of this idea, they give utterance in the most confident tone to the most shallow decisions; when, criticizing the works of a poet and painter upon the same subject, they set down as faults any divergences they may observe, laying the blame upon the one or other accordingly as they may have more taste for poetry or for painting.

Indeed, this false criticism has misled in some degree the professors of art. It has produced the love of description in poetry, and of allegory in painting: while the critics strove to reduce poetry to a speaking painting, without properly knowing what it could and ought to paint; and painting to a dumb poem, without having considered in what degree it could express general ideas, without alienating itself from its destiny, and degenerating into an arbitrary method of writing.

The counteraction of this false taste and these groundless judgments is the principal aim of the following essay.

It originated casually, and has grown up rather in consequence of my reading than through the systematic development of general principles. It is accordingly rather to be regarded as unarranged collectanea for a book than as a book itself.

Still I flatter myself that even as such it will not be altogether deserving of contempt. We Germans have in general no want of systematic books. At deducing everything we wish, in the most beautiful order, from a few adopted explanations of words, we are the most complete adepts of any nation in the world.

Baumgarten acknowledged that he was indebted to Gesner's Dictionary for a great part of the examples in his work on Æsthetic. If my reasoning is not so cogent as Baumgarten's, my illustrations will at least taste more freshly of the well-spring.

Since I have, as it were, set out from the Laokoon, and several times return to it, I have wished to give it a share also in the title. Other short digressions on different

points in the history of ancient art contribute less to my end, and only stand where they do because I can never hope to find a more suitable place for them.

Calling to mind, as I do, that under the term Painting I comprehend the plastic arts generally, I give no pledge that under the name of Poetry I may not take a glance at those other arts in which the method of imitation is progressive.

LAOKOON.

CHAPTER I.

Herr Winckelmann has pronounced a noble simplicity and quiet grandeur, displayed in the posture no less than in the expression, to be the characteristic features common to all the Greek masterpieces of Painting and Sculpture. "As," says he,[1] "the depths of the sea always remain calm, however much the surface may be raging, so the expression in the figures of the Greeks, under every form of passion, shows a great and self-collected soul.

"This spirit is portrayed in the countenance of Laokoon, and not in the countenance alone, under the most violent suffering; the pain discovers itself in every muscle and sinew of his body, and the beholder, whilst looking at the agonized contraction of the abdomen, without viewing the face and the other parts, believes that he almost feels the pain himself. This pain expresses itself, however, without any violence, both in the features and in the whole posture. He raises no terrible shriek, such as Virgil makes his Laokoon utter, for the opening of the mouth does not admit it; it is rather an anxious and suppressed sigh, as described by Sadoleto. The pain of body and grandeur of soul are, as it were, weighed out, and distributed with equal strength, through the whole frame of the figure. Laokoon suffers, but he suffers as the Philoktetes of Sophokles; his misery pierces us to the very soul, but inspires us with a wish that we could endure misery like that great man.

"The expressing of so great a soul is far higher than

[1] On the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture, pp. 21, 22.

the painting of beautiful nature. The artist must have felt within himself that strength of spirit which he imprinted upon his marble. Greece had philosophers and artists in one person, and more than one Metrodorus.[2] Philosophy gave her hand to art, and breathed into its figures more than ordinary souls."

The observation on which the foregoing remarks are founded, "that the pain in the face of Laokoon does not show itself with that force which its intensity would have led us to expect," is perfectly correct. Moreover, it is indisputable that it is in this very point where the half-connoisseur would have decided that the artist had fallen short of Nature, and had not reached the true pathos of pain, that his wisdom is particularly conspicuous.

But I confess I differ from Winckelmann as to what is in his opinion the basis of this wisdom, and as to the universality of the rule which he deduces from it.

I acknowledge that I was startled, first by the glance of disapproval which he casts upon Virgil, and secondly by the comparison with Philoktetes. From this point then I shall set out, and write down my thoughts as they were developed in me.

"Laokoon suffers as Sophokles' Philoktetes." But how does the latter suffer? It is curious that his sufferings should leave such a different impression behind them. The cries, the shrieking, the wild imprecations, with which he filled the camp, and interrupted all the sacrifices and holy rites, resound no less horribly through his desert island, and were the cause of his being banished to it. The same sounds of despondency, sorrow, and despair fill the theatre in the poet's imitation. It has been observed that the third act of this piece is shorter than the others: from this it may be gathered, say the critics,[3] that the ancients took little pains to preserve a uniformity of length in the different acts. I quite agree with them, but I should rather ground my opinion upon another example than this. The sorrowful exclamations, the moanings, the interrupted ἆ, ἆ! φεῦ! ἀτταταῖ! ὤ μοι μοι! the whole lines full of πάπα πάπα! of which this act con-

[2] Plinius, xxxv. 40.
[3] Brumoy, Théâtre des Grecs, t. ii. p. 89.

sists, must have been pronounced with tensions and breakings off altogether different from those required in a continuous speech, and doubtless made this act last quite as long in the representation as the others. It appears much shorter to the reader, when seen on paper, than it must have done to the audience in a theatre.

A cry is the natural expression of bodily pain. Homer's wounded heroes frequently fall with cries to the ground. He makes Venus, when merely scratched, shriek aloud;[4] not that he may thereby paint the effeminacy of the goddess of pleasure, but rather that he may give suffering Nature her due; for even the iron Mars, when he feels the lance of Diomedes, shrieks so horribly that his cries are like those of ten thousand furious warriors, and fill both armies with horror.[5] Though Homer, in other respects, raises his heroes above human nature, they always remain faithful to it in matters connected with the feeling of pain and insult, or its expression through cries, tears, or reproaches. In their actions they are beings of a higher order, in their feelings true men.

I know that we more refined Europeans, of a wiser and later age, know how to keep our mouths and eyes under closer restraint. We are forbidden by courtesy and propriety to cry and weep; and with us the active bravery of the first rough age of the world has been changed into a passive. Yet even our own ancestors, though barbarians, were greater in the latter than in the former. To suppress all pain, to meet the stroke of death with unflinching eye, to die laughing under the bites of adders, to lament neither their sins nor the loss of their dearest friends: these were the characteristics of the old heroic courage of the north.[6] Palnatoki forbade his Jomsburgers either to fear or so much as to mention the name of fear.

Not so the Greek. He felt and feared. He gave utterance to his pain and sorrow. He was ashamed of no human weaknesses; only none of them must hold him

[4] Iliad, v. 343, Ἡ δὲ μέγα ἰάχουσα—. [5] Iliad, v. 859.

[6] Th. Bartholinus, de causis contemptæ a Danis adhuc gentilibus, cap. I. [For Palnatoki, the famous sea-rover of the 10th century, v. Mallet's Northern Antiq. (Bohn ed. p. 139).—Ed.]

back from the path of honour, or impede him in the fulfilment of his duty. What in the barbarian sprang from habit and ferocity arose from principle in the Greek. With him heroism was as the spark concealed in flint, which, so long as no external force awakens it, sleeps in quiet, nor robs the stone either of its clearness or its coldness. With the barbarian it was a bright consuming flame, which was ever roaring, and devoured, or at least blackened, every other good quality. Thus when Homer makes the Trojans march to the combat with wild cries, the Greeks, on the contrary, in resolute silence, the critics justly observe that the poet intended to depict the one as barbarians, the other as a civilized people. I wonder that they have not remarked a similar contrast of character in another passage.[7] The hostile armies have made a truce; they are busied with burning their dead; and these rites are accompanied on both sides with the warm flow of tears (*δάκρυα θέρμα χέοντες*). But Priam forbids the Trojans to weep (*οὐδ' εἶα κλαίειν Πρίαμος μέγας*). He forbade them to weep, says Dacier, because he feared the effect would be too softening, and that on the morrow they would go with less courage to the battle. True! But why, I ask, should Priam only fear this result? Why does not Agamemnon also lay the same prohibition on the Greeks? The poet has a deeper meaning; he wishes to teach us that the civilized Greek could be brave at the same time that he wept, while in the uncivilized Trojan all human feelings were to be previously stifled. *Νεμέσσωμαί γε μεν οὐδὲν κλαίειν*, is the remark which, elsewhere,[8] Homer puts in the mouth of the intelligent son of Nestor.

It is worth observing that among the few tragedies which have come down to us from antiquity, two are found in which bodily pain constitutes not the lightest part of the misfortune which befalls the suffering heroes —the Philoktetes and the dying Hercules. Sophokles paints the last also, as moaning and shrieking, weeping and crying. Thanks to our polite neighbours, those masters of propriety, no such ridiculous and intolerable

[7] Iliad, vii. 421. [8] Odyss. iv. 195.

characters as a moaning Philoktetes or a shrieking Hercules will ever again appear upon the stage. One of their latest poets[9] has indeed ventured upon a Philoktetes, but would he have dared to exhibit the true one?

Even a Laokoon is found among the lost plays of Sophokles. Would that Fate had spared it to us! The slight mention which some old grammarians have made of it affords us no ground for concluding how the poet had handled his subject; but of this I feel certain, that Laokoon would not have been drawn more stoically than Philoktetes and Hercules. All stoicism is undramatical; and our sympathy is always proportioned to the suffering expressed by the object which interests us. It is true, if we see him bear his misery with a great soul, this grandeur of soul excites our admiration; but admiration is only a cold emotion, and its inactive astonishment excludes every warmer passion as well as every distinct idea.

I now come to my inference; if it be true that a cry at the sensation of bodily pain, particularly according to the old Greek way of thinking, is quite compatible with greatness of soul, it cannot have been for the sake of expressing such greatness that the artist avoided imitating this shriek in marble. Another reason therefore must be found for his here deviating from his rival, the poet, who expresses it with the highest purpose.

CHAPTER II.

Be it fable or history that Love made the first essay in the plastic arts, it is certain that it never wearied of guiding the hands of the great masters of old. Painting, as now carried out in its whole compass, may be defined generally as the art of imitating figures on a flat surface; but the wise Greek allotted it far narrower limits, and confined it to the imitation of beautiful figures only; his artist painted nothing but the beautiful. Even the commonly beautiful, the beautiful of a lower order, was

[9] Chateaubrun.

only his accidental subject, his exercise, his relaxation It was the perfection of the object itself that was to make his work exquisite; and he was too great to ask beholders to be satisfied with the mere cold pleasure which arises from a striking resemblance, or the consideration of his ability. In his art nothing was dearer, nothing seemed nobler to him than its proper end.

"Who would paint you when nobody will look at you?" asks an old epigrammatist[1] of an exceedingly deformed man. Many modern artists would say, "However misshapen you are, I will paint you; and although no one could look at you with pleasure, they will look with pleasure at my picture; not because it is your likeness, but because it will be an evidence of my skill in knowing how to delineate such a horror so faithfully."

It is true the propensity to this wanton boasting, united to fair abilities, not ennobled by exalted subjects, is too natural for even the Greeks not to have had their Pauson and their Pyricus. They had them, but they rendered them strict justice. Pauson, who kept below the beautiful of common nature, whose low taste loved to portray all that is faulty and ugly in the human form,[2]

[1] Antiochus (Antholog. lib. ii. cap. 4). Hardouin, in his commentary on Pliny (lib. xxxv. sect. 36) attributes this epigram to a certain Piso; but no such name is to be found in the catalogue of Greek epigrammatists.

[2] It is for this reason that Aristotle forbids his pictures to be shown to young people, viz. that their imaginations may be preserved from any acquaintance with ugly forms (Polit. lib. viii. cap. 5). Boden proposes to read Pausanias, instead of Pauson, in this passage, because he is well known to have painted licentious pictures (De umbra poetica, Comment. i. 13), as though a philosophical lawgiver were required to teach us that such voluptuous allurements were to be kept out of the reach of young people. Had he but referred to the well-known passage in the Poetics (cap. ii.), he would never have put forward his hypothesis. Some commentators (*e.g.* Kühn on Ælian. Var. Hist. lib. iv. cap. 3) maintain that the distinction which Aristotle there draws between Polygnotus, Dionysius, and Pauson consisted in Polygnotus having painted gods and heroes, while Dionysius painted men, and Pauson beasts. They all, however, painted the human figure; and Pauson's once having painted a horse does not prove that he was an animal painter, as Boden supposes him to have been. Their rank was decided by the degrees of beauty with which they endowed their human forms. Dionysius could paint nothing but men, and was called, *par excellence*, as

lived in the most contemptible poverty.[3] And Pyreicus, who painted barbers' rooms, dirty workshops, apes, and kitchen herbs, with all the industry of a Dutch artist (as though things of that kind possessed such charm in nature, or could so rarely be seen), acquired the surname of Rhyparographer,[4] or "Dirt-Painter!" although the luxurious rich man paid for his works with their weight in gold, as if to assist their intrinsic worthlessness by this imaginary value.

The state itself did not deem it beneath its dignity to confine the artist within his proper sphere by an exercise of its power. The law of the Thebans recommending him to use imitation as a means of arriving at ideal beauty; and prohibiting, on pain of punishment, its use for the attainment of ideal ugliness, is well known. This was no law against bunglers, as most writers, and among them even Junius,[5] have supposed. It was in condemnation of the Greek Ghezzi, of that unworthy device which enables an artist to obtain a likeness by the exaggeration of the uglier parts of his original, *i.e.* by caricature.

From the self-same spirit of the beautiful sprang the following regulation of the Olympic judges (ἑλλανοδίκαι). Every winner obtained a statue, but only to him who had been thrice a conqueror was a portrait statue (ἄγαλμα εἰκωνικόν) erected.[6] Too many indifferent portraits were not allowed to find a place among the productions of art; for although a portrait admits of the ideal, this last must be subordinate to the likeness; it is the ideal of an individual man, and not the ideal of man in the abstract.

We laugh when we hear that among the ancients even the arts were subjected to municipal laws, but we are not always in the right when we laugh. Unquestionably law must not assume the power of laying any constraint on knowledge; for the aim of knowledge is truth; truth is

it were, the "Anthropographus," or "Man-painter," because he copied nature too slavishly, and was unable to rise to that ideal below which it would have been sacrilege to have painted gods and heroes.

[3] Aristophanes Plut. 602, Acharnenses, 854.

[4] Plinius, xxxv. 37. [But note the better readings *Rhopographus* (painter of *vulgar* subjects) and *Piræicus* for Pyricus.—Ed.]

[5] De Pictura vet. lib. II. cap. iv. [6] Plinius, xxxiv. 9

necessary to the soul, and it becomes tyranny to do it the smallest violence in the gratification of this essential need. The aim of art, on the contrary, is pleasure, which is not indispensable; and it may therefore depend upon the lawgiver to decide what kind of pleasure, and what degree of every kind, he would allow.

The plastic arts especially, besides the infallible influence which they exercise upon the national character, are capable of an effect which demands the closest inspection of the law. As beautiful men produced beautiful statues, so the latter reacted upon the former, and the state became indebted to beautiful statues for beautiful men. But with us the tender imaginative power of the mother is supposed to show itself only in the production of monsters.

In this point of view I think I can detect some truth in certain stories, which are generally rejected as pure inventions. The mothers of Aristomenes, Aristodamas, Alexander the Great, Scipio, Augustus, and Galerius, all dreamed, while pregnant, that they had intercourse with a serpent. The serpent was a token of divinity,[7] and the beautiful statues and paintings of Bacchus, Apollo, Mercury, or Hercules were seldom without one. These honourable wives had by day feasted their eyes upon the god, and the confusing dream recalled the reptile's form. Thus I at the same time maintain the dream and dispose of the interpretation, which the pride of their sons and the shamelessness of the flatterer put upon it: for there must have been a reason why the adulterous phantasy should always have been a serpent.

But I am digressing; all I want to establish is, that among the ancients beauty was the highest law of the plastic arts. And this, once proved, it is a necessary consequence that everything else over which their range could be at the same time extended, if incompatible with beauty, gave way entirely to it; if compatible, was at

[7] It is an error to suppose that the serpent was exclusively the symbol of a healing deity. Justin Martyr (Apolog. ii. p. 55, Edit. Sylburgh) says expressly: *παρὰ παντὶ τῶν νομιζομένων παρ' ὑμῖν θεῶν, ὅφις σύμβολον μέγα καὶ μυστήριον ἀναγράφεται*: and it would be easy to quote a whole series of monuments where the serpent accompanies deities who had no connexion whatever with the healing art.

least subordinate. I will abide by my expression. There are passions, and degrees of passion, which are expressed by the ugliest possible contortions of countenance, and throw the whole body into such a forced position that all the beautiful lines which cover its surface in a quiet attitude are lost. From all such emotions the ancient masters either abstained entirely, or reduced them to that lower degree in which they are capable of a certain measure of beauty.

Rage and despair disgraced none of their productions; I dare maintain that they have never painted a Fury.[8]

[8] Though we were to review all the works of art mentioned by Pliny, Pausanias, and others, or search among the ancient statues, bas-reliefs, and paintings still extant, we should nowhere find a fury. I except such figures as belong to the language of symbols, rather than to art, and are principally to be found upon coins. Meantime Spence, since he was determined to discover furies, would do much better to borrow them from the coins (Seguini Numis. p. 178. Spanhem. de Præst. Numism. Dissert. xiii. p. 639. Les Cæsars de Julien, par Spanheim, p. 48) than he has done in introducing them by an ingenious idea into a work in which there is certainly no trace of them. He says in his Polymetis (Dial. xvi. p. 272): "Though furies are very uncommon in the works of the ancient artists, yet there is one story in which they are generally introduced by them. I mean the death of Meleager; in the relievos of which they are often represented as encouraging or urging Althæa to burn the fatal brand on which the life of her only son depended. Even a woman's resentment, you see, could not go so far without a little help of the devil. In a copy of one of these relievos, published by Bellori in the Admiranda, there are two women standing by the altar with Althæa, who are probably meant for furies in the original (for who but furies would assist at such a sacrifice?). That they are scarce horrid enough for that character is doubtless the fault of the copy, but what is most to be observed in that piece is a round medallion below, about the midst of it, with the evident head of a fury upon it. This might be what Althæa addressed her prayers to whenever she was going to do any very evil action, and on this occasion in particular had every reason, therefore," &c. By such tortuous logic as this anything might be proved. Who else but the furies, asks Spence, would have been present at such an action? I answer, the maid-servants of Althæa, who had to light and keep up the fire. Ovid says (Metamorph. viii. 460):—

> "Protulit hunc (stipitem) genetrix, tædasque in fragmina poni
> Imperat, et positis inimicos admovet ignes."

Both persons, in fact, have in their hands such "tædas," or long pieces of resinous fir as the ancients used for torches, and one of them has just broken one of these pieces of fir, as her attitude proves. I am just

Indignation was softened down to seriousness. In poetry it was the indignant Jupiter who hurled the lightning, in art it was only the serious. Grief was lessened into mournfulness; and where this softening could find no place, where mere grief would have been as lowering as disfiguring, what did Timanthes? His painting of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia is known, in which he has imparted to all the bystanders that peculiar degree of sorrow which becomes them, but has concealed the face of the father, which should have shown the most profound of all. On this many clever criticisms have been passed. He had, says one,[9] so exhausted his powers in the sorrowful faces of the bystanders that he despaired of being able to give a more sorrowful one to the father. By so doing he confessed, says another, that the pain of a father under such circumstances is beyond all expression.[10] For my part, I see no incapacity of either artist or art in it. With the degree of passion the corresponding lines of countenance

as far from recognizing a fury on the disc near the middle of the work. It is a face which expresses violent pain, and without doubt is meant to be the head of Meleager himself. (Metamorph. viii. 515.)

> "Inscius atque absens flamma Meleagros in illa
> Uritur; et cæcis torreri viscera sentit
> Ignibus: et magnos superat virtute dolores."

The artist used it as a means of transition into the subsequent scene of the same story, which directly after exhibits Meleager as dying. The figures which Spence considers furies, Montfaucon takes to be Parcæ (Antiq. Exp. vol. i. p. 162), except the head upon the disc, which he also decides to be a fury. Even Bellori (Admiranda, tab. 77) leaves it undecided whether they are parcæ or furies—an "or," which is sufficient evidence that they are neither the one nor the other. The rest of Montfaucon's explanation is also deficient in accuracy. The female figure who is leaning upon her elbows against the bed should have been called Kassandra, and not Atalanta. Atalanta is the one who is sitting in a mournful attitude with her back turned towards the bed. The artist has shown great intelligence in separating her from the family, inasmuch as she was only the mistress and not the wife of Meleager, and her sorrow therefore at a misfortune of which she had been the innocent cause could only have exasperated his relations.

[9] Plinius, xxxv. 35: "Cum mæstos pinxisset omnes, præcipue patruum, et tristitiæ omnem imaginem consumpsisset, patris ipsius vultum relavit, quem digne non poterat ostendere."

[10] "Summi mœroris acerbitatem arte exprimi non posse confessus est."—Valerius Maximus, viii. 11.

are also strengthened; in the highest degree they are most decided, and nothing in art is easier than their expression. But Timanthes knew the limits within which the Graces had confined his art. He knew that the grief which became Agamemnon, as a father, must have been expressed by contortions, at all times ugly; but so far as dignity and beauty could be combined with the expression of such a feeling, so far he pushed it. True, he would fain have passed over the ugly, fain have softened it; but since his piece did not admit either of its omission or diminution, what was left him but its concealment? He left to conjecture what he might not paint. In short, this concealment is a sacrifice which the artist made to beauty, and is an instance, not how expression may exceed the capacity of art, but how it should be subjected to art's first law, the law of beauty.

And now, if we apply this to the Laokoon, the principle for which I am searching is clear. The master aimed at the highest beauty compatible with the adopted circumstances of bodily pain. The latter, in all its disfiguring violence, could not be combined with the former; therefore he must reduce it; he must soften shrieks into sighs, not because a shriek would have betrayed an ignoble soul, but because it would have produced a hideous contortion of the countenance. For only imagine the mouth of Laokoon to be forced open, and then judge! Let him shriek, and look at him! It *was* a form which inspired compassion, for it displayed beauty and pain at once. It has become an ugly and horrible shape from which we gladly avert our eyes; for the sight of pain excites annoyance, unless the beauty of the suffering object change that annoyance into the sweet emotion of pity.

The mere wide opening of the mouth, setting aside the forced and disagreeable manner in which the other parts of the face are displaced and distorted by it, is in painting a spot, and in sculpture a cavity; both which produce the worst possible effect. Montfaucon displayed little taste when he pronounced an old bearded head with a gaping mouth to be a bust of Jupiter, uttering oracles.[11] Is a god

[11] Antiquit. Expl. vol. I. p. 50.

obliged to shout when he divulges the future? Would a pleasing outline of the mouth have cast suspicion on his utterance? Neither do I believe Valerius when he says, merely from memory, that in that picture of Timanthes, Ajax was represented as shrieking.[12] Even far worse masters, in a period when art was already degenerate, did not think of allowing the wildest barbarians, when filled with affright, and the terrors of death beneath the victor's sword, to open their mouths and shriek.[13]

It is certain that this softening down of extreme bodily pain to a lower degree of feeling is perceptible in several productions of ancient art. The suffering Hercules in the poisoned garment, the work of an unknown old master, was not the Hercules of Sophokles, whose shrieks are so horrible that the rocks of Lokris and headlands of Euboia resound therewith. He was gloomy rather than wild.[14] The Philoktetes of Pythagoras Leontinus appeared to impart his pain to the beholder, yet this effect would have been destroyed by the least ugliness of feature. I may be asked how I know that this master executed a statue of Philoktetes? From a passage in Pliny, so manifestly either interpolated or mutilated that it ought not to have awaited my amendment.[15]

[12] He thus specifies the degrees of sorrow actually expressed by Timanthes: "Calchantem tristem, mæstum Ulyssem, clamantem Ajacem, lamentantem Menelaum." Tho shrieking Ajax could not but have been an ugly figure; and since neither Cicero nor Quintilian mention it in their descriptions of this painting, I am the more inclined to believe it an addition by which Valerius thought to enrich the picture from his own imagination.

[13] Bellorii Admiranda, tab. 11, 12. [14] Plinius, xxxiv. 19, 36.

[15] "Eundum" (namely Myro), we read in Pliny (lib. xxxiv. sec. 19, 4), "vicit et (Pythagoras) Leontinus, qui fecit stadicdromon Astylon, qui Olympiæ ostenditur: et Libyn puerum tenentem tabulam, eodem loco, et mala ferentem nudum. Syracusis autem claudicantem; cujus ulceris dolorem sentire etiam spectantes videntur." Let us consider the last sentence a little more closely. Manifestly some one is spoken of who is known by all on account of a painful ulcer: "Cujus ulceris," &c., and is this "cujus" to refer to the mere "claudicantem," and the "claudicantem" possibly agree with a "puerum," supplied from the foregoing clause? No one has more right to be celebrated on account of such an ulcer than Philoktetes. I therefore read "Philoctetem" instead of "claudicantem," or at least consider that the former of the two words has slipped out of the manuscripts, owing to its resemblance in sound to the latter; and that the proper reading would be "Philoc-

CHAPTER III.

But, as has been already mentioned, art has in modern times been allotted a far wider sphere. "Its imitations, it is said, extend over the whole of visible nature, of which the beautiful is but a small part: truth and expression is its first law; and as nature herself is ever ready to sacrifice beauty to higher aims, so likewise the artist must render it subordinate to his general design, and not pursue it farther than truth and expression permit. Enough that, through these two, what is most ugly in nature has been changed into a beauty of art."

But even if we should leave this idea, whatever its value, for the present undisputed, would there not arise other considerations independent of it, which would compel the artist to put certain limits to expression, and prevent him from ever drawing it at its highest intensity?

I believe the fact, that it is to a single moment that the material limits of art confine all its imitations, will lead us to similar views.

If the artist, out of ever-varying nature, can only make use of a single moment, and the painter especially can only use this moment from one point of view, whilst their works are intended to stand the test not only of a passing glance, but of long and repeated contemplation, it is clear that this moment, and the point from which this moment is viewed, cannot be chosen with too great a regard to results. Now that only is a happy choice which allows the imagination free scope. The longer we gaze, the more must our imagination add; and the more our imagination adds, the more we must believe we see. In the whole course of an emotion there is no moment which possesses this advantage so little as its highest stage. There is nothing beyond this; and the presentation of extremes to the eye clips the wings of fancy,

tetem claudicantem." Sophokles speaks of his στίβον κατ' ἀνάγκαν ἕρπειν: and he must have limped, since he could not set his diseased foot firmly to the ground.

prevents her from soaring beyond the impression of the senses, and compels her to occupy herself with weaker images; further than these she ventures not, but shrinks from the visible fulness of expression as her limit. Thus, if Laokoon sighs, the imagination can hear him shriek; but if he shrieks, it can neither rise a step higher above nor descend a step below this representation, without seeing him in a condition which, as it will be more endurable, becomes less interesting. It either hears him merely moaning, or sees him already dead.

Furthermore, this single moment receives through art an unchangeable duration; therefore it must not express anything, of which we can think only as transitory. All appearances, to whose very being, according to our ideas, it is essential that they suddenly break forth and as suddenly vanish, that they can be what they are but for a moment,—all such appearances, be they pleasing or be they horrible, receive, through the prolongation which art gives them, such an unnatural character, that at every repeated glance the impression they make grows weaker and weaker, and at last fills us with dislike or disgust of the whole object. La Mettrie, who got himself painted and engraved as a second Demokritus, laughs only the first time we look at him. Look at him oftener, and he changes from a philosopher into a fool. His laugh becomes a grin. So it is with shrieks; the violent pain which compels their utterance soon either subsides, or destroys its suffering subject altogether. If, therefore, even the most patient and resolute man shrieks, he does not do so unremittingly; and it is only the seeming continuance of his cries in art which turns them into effeminate impotence or childish petulance. This, at least, the artist of the Laokoon must needs have avoided, even if beauty were not injured by a shriek, and even had his art allowed of his expressing suffering without beauty.

Among the ancient painters, Timomachus seems to have delighted in selecting subjects suited to the display of extreme passion. His raving Ajax and infanticide Medea were celebrated paintings; but, from the descriptions we possess of them, it is plain that he thoroughly understood and judiciously combined that point at which the beholder

is rather led to the conception of the extreme than actually sees it with that appearance with which we do not associate the idea of transitoriness so inseparably as to be displeased by its continuance in art. He did not paint Medea at the instant when she was actually murdering her children, but a few moments before, whilst her motherly love was still struggling with her jealousy. We see the end of the contest beforehand; we tremble in the anticipation of soon recognizing her as simply cruel, and our imagination carries us far beyond anything which the painter could have portrayed in that terrible moment itself. But, for that very reason, the irresolution of Medea, which art has made perpetual, is so far from giving offence, that we are rather inclined to wish that it could have remained the same in nature, that the contest of passions had never been decided, or at least had continued so long that time and reflexion had gained the mastery over fury, and assured the victory to the feelings of the mother. This wisdom of Timomachus has called forth great and frequent praise, and raised him far above another unknown painter, who was foolish enough to draw Medea at the very height of her frenzy, and thus to impart to this fleeting, transient moment of extreme madness a duration that disgusts all nature. The poet,[1] who censures him, says very sensibly, whilst addressing the figure itself: "Thirstest thou then ever for the blood of thy children? Is there ever a new Jason, a new Kreusa there to exasperate thee unceasingly?" "Away with thee, even in painting!" he adds, in a tone of vexation.

Of the frenzied Ajax of Timomachus we can form some judgment from the account of Philostratus.[2] Ajax did not appear raging among the herds, and binding and slaughtering oxen and rams instead of men; but the master exhibits him sitting wearied with these heroic deeds of insanity, and conceiving the design of suicide;

[1] Philippus, Anthol. lib. IV. cap. ix. ep. 10—

Αἰεὶ γὰρ διψᾷς βρεφέων φόνον. ἦ τις Ἰήσων
Δεύτερος, ἢ Γλαύκη τις πάλι σοι πρόφασις;
Ἔρρε καὶ ἐν κηρῷ, παιδοκτόνε——

[2] Vita Apoll. lib. II. cap. xxii.

and that is really the raging Ajax: not because he is just then raging, but because we see that he has been; because we can form the most lively idea of the extremity of his frenzy from the shame and despair which he himself feels at the thoughts of it. We see the storm in the wrecks and corpses with which it has strewn the beach.

CHAPTER IV.

I HAVE passed under review the reasons alleged for the artist of the Laokoon being obliged to set certain bounds to the expression of bodily pain; and I find that they are altogether derived from the peculiar conditions of his art, and its necessary limits and wants. Perhaps hardly any of them would be found equally applicable to poetry.

We will not here examine how far the poet can succeed in depicting physical beauty. It is undeniable, that as the whole infinite realm of the perfectly excellent lies open to his imitation, this outward visible garb, the perfect form of which is beauty, is only one of the least of the means by which he can interest us in his characters. Often he neglects this means entirely, feeling certain, if his hero has once won our regard, of so preoccupying our minds with his nobler qualities that we shall not bestow a thought upon his bodily form; or that if we do think of it, it will be with such favourable prepossessions that we shall, of ourselves, attribute to him an exterior, if not handsome, at least not unpleasing; at any rate he will not permit himself to pay any regard to the sense of sight, in any trait, which is not expressly intended to appeal to it. When Virgil's Laokoon shrieks, does it occur to any one that a widely opened mouth is the necessary accompaniment of a shriek, and that this open mouth is ugly? It is enough that "clamores horrendos ad sidera tollit," whatever it may be to the eyes, is a powerful appeal to the ears. If any one here feels the want of a beautiful picture, the poet has failed to make a due impression on him.

Moreover, the poet is not compelled to concentrate his picture into the space of a single moment. He has it in

his power to take up every action of his hero at its source, and pursue it to its issue, through all possible variations Each of these, which would cost the artist a separate work, costs the poet but a single trait; and should this trait, if viewed by itself, offend the imagination of the hearer, either such preparation has been made for it by what has preceded, or it will be so softened and compensated by what follows that its solitary impression is lost, and the combination produces the best possible effect. Thus, were it really unbecoming in a man to shriek under the violence of bodily pain, what prejudice could this slight and transitory impropriety excite in us against one in whose favour we are already prepossessed by his other virtues? Virgil's Laokoon shrieks, but this shrieking Laokoon is the same man whom we already know and love as a far-sighted patriot and affectionate father. We attribute his cries not to his character, but solely to his intolerable suffering. It is this alone that we hear in them, and by them alone could the poet have brought it home to us.

Who, then, still censures him? Who is not rather forced to own that whilst the artist has done well in not allowing him to shriek, the poet has done equally well in causing him to do so?

But Virgil is here merely a narrative poet: will his justification include the dramatic poet also? One impression is produced by the relation of a person's shriek, another by the shriek itself. The drama designed for the living art of the actor should, perhaps, for that very reason be compelled to confine itself more strictly within the limits of material art. In it we do not merely believe that we see and hear a shrieking Philoktetes, we actually do see and hear him. The nearer the actor approaches to nature, the more will our eyes and ears be offended; for it is indisputable that they are so in nature itself when we meet with such loud and violent expressions of pain. Besides, bodily pain generally is not capable of exciting that sympathy which other ills awaken. Our imagination can discern too little in it for the mere sight of it to arouse in us anything of an equivalent emotion. Sophokles, therefore, in making Philoktetes and Hercules moan and cry, shriek and howl, to such an excess, may easily have

offended not a merely conventional sense of propriety, but one grounded upon the very existence of our feelings. It is impossible that the coactors in the scene should share his sufferings in the high degree that these unmeasured outbreaks seem to demand. These coactors would appear to us, their spectators, comparatively cold; and yet we cannot but regard their sympathies as the measure of our own. If we add, that it is with difficulty, if at all, that the actor can succeed in carrying the representation of bodily pain as far as positive illusion, it becomes a question whether the modern dramatic poets should not rather be praised than blamed for having completely avoided this rock, or at all events doubled it in but a light craft.

How many things would appear incontestable in theory, if genius had not succeeded in proving them to be the contrary by fact. None of the above considerations are groundless, and still the Philoktetes remains one of the masterpieces of the stage: for a part of them are not applicable to Sophokles, and only by rising superior to the rest has he attained to that beauty of which the timid critic, without this example, would never have dreamt. The following remarks will demonstrate this more exactly.

1. What wonderful skill has the poet shown in strengthening and enlarging the idea of bodily pain. He chose a wound (for the circumstances of the story may also be considered as depending on his choice, inasmuch as he selected the whole legend for the sake of the circumstances favourable to him which it contained); he chose, I say, a wound, and not an internal malady; because the former admits of a more lively representation than the latter, however painful it may be. For this reason, the inward sympathetic fire which consumes Meleager as his mother sacrifices him to her sisterly fury by means of the fatal brand, would be less dramatic than a wound. This wound, moreover, was a punishment divinely decreed. A supernatural poison incessantly raged therein, and only a more violent attack of pain had its periodical duration, at the expiration of which the unhappy man always fell into a benumbing sleep, during which exhausted nature recovered strength to tread again the same path of suffering. Chateaubrun makes him wounded merely by the poisoned

arrow of a Trojan. What extraordinary issue was to be expected from so ordinary an occurrence? In the ancient wars every one was exposed to it: how came it, then, that in Philoktetes' case only it was followed by such dreadful consequences? Besides, is not a natural poison, that works for nine whole years, far more improbable than all the fabled wonders with which the Greek has adorned his piece?

2. Sophokles felt full well that, however great and terrible he made the bodily pain of his hero, it would not be sufficient, by itself, to excite any remarkable degree of sympathy. He therefore combined it with other evils, which likewise could not greatly move us of themselves, but which, from this combination, receive the same melancholy colouring, which they in their turn impart to the bodily pain. These evils were a complete absence of human society, hunger, and all the hardships of life, to which a man under such privations and an inclement climate is exposed.[1] Imagine a man in these circum-

[1] When the chorus views the misery of Philoktetes in this combination, it appears to be deeply moved by the consideration of his helpless isolation. We hear the sociable Greek in every word they utter. About one of these passages I entertain, however, some doubts; it is the following (v. 691, 695, Dind.):—

"Ιν' αὐτὸς ἦν πρόσουρος, οὐκ ἔχων βάσιν,
οὐδέ τιν' ἐγχώρων,
κακογείτονα παρ' ᾧ στόνον ἀντίτυπον
βαρυβρῶτ' ἀποκλαύ-
σειεν αἱματηρόν.

The common translation of Winsheim renders it thus:

"Ventis expositus et pedibus captus
Nullum cohabitatorem
Nec vicinum ullum saltem malum habens, apud quem gemitum mutuum
Gravemque ac cruentum
Ederet."

The translation of Thomas Johnson only differs from the foregoing verbally:

"Ubi ipse ventis erat expositus, firmum gradum non habens,
Nec quenquam indigenarum,
Nec malum vicinum, apud quem ploraret
Vehementer edacem
Sanguineum morbum, mutuo gemitu."

stances, but give him health, strength, and industry, and he becomes a Robinson Crusoe, whose lot, though not

One would fancy that he had borrowed this variation of words from the metrical translation of Thomas Naogeorgus. In his work (which is very scarce, and seems to have been known to Fabricius only through Oporin's Catalogue), he thus renders the passage in question:

"Ubi expositus fuit
Ventis ipse, gradum firmum haud habens,
Nec quenquam indigenam, nec vel malum
Vicinum, ploraret apud quem
Vehementer edacem atque cruentum
Morbum mutuo."

If these translations are right, the praise which the chorus bestows upon the society of our fellow-men is the strongest that can be imagined. The miserable one has no one with him; he knows of no friendly neighbour; he would have felt too happy had he been blessed with even a bad man for a neighbour! Thomson, perhaps, had this passage in his thoughts, when he represented Melisander, who likewise had been exposed on a desert island by villains, as saying:—

"Cast on the wildest of the Cyclad isles,
Where never human foot had marked the shore,
These ruffians left me—yet, believe me, Arcas,
Such is the rooted love we bear mankind,
All ruffians as they were, I never heard
A sound so dismal as their parting oars."

He also preferred the society of villains to none at all. A great and excellent meaning! Were it only certain that it was the one which Sophokles intended to convey; but I must unwillingly confess that I cannot extract any sense of the kind from him unless I should prefer to see with the eyes of the old scholiast, who paraphrases the passage as follows, rather than with my own: Οὐ *μόνον ὅπου καλὸν οὐκ εἶχέ τινα τῶν ἐγχωρίων γείτονα, ἀλλὰ οὐδὲ κακόν, παρ' οὗ ἀμοιβαῖον λόγον στενάζων ἀκούσειε.* This interpretation has been followed by Brumoy, and by our latest German translator, as well as by those mentioned above. The first says, "sans société même importune"; the second, "Deprived of all society, even the most troublesome." My reasons for differing from them are the following. In the first place, it is plain that if *κακογείτονα* is separated from *τιν' ἐγχώρων*, and constitutes a distinct clause, the particle *οὐδέ* must necessarily be repeated before it. Since it is not, *κακογείτονα* must clearly be taken with *τινα*, and the comma after *ἐγχώρων* must be omitted. This comma has crept in in consequence of the translation, for I actually find that several simply Greek editions (*e.g.* one in 8vo, published at Wittenberg, 1585, which was altogether unknown to Fabricius) are without it, and place the first comma rightly after *κακογείτονα*. In the second place, can he be justly said to be a bad neighbour, from whom we have reason to expect the *στόνον ἀντίτυπον ἀμοιβαῖον*, as explained by the scholiast? It is the

indifferent to us, has certainly no great claim upon our sympathy. For we are seldom so contented with human society, that the quiet we enjoy when secluded from it seems without a charm for us; especially under the idea, which flatters every individual, that he can gradually learn to dispense with all external aid. On the other hand, imagine a man afflicted by the most painful and incurable disease, but at the same time surrounded by kind friends who take care that he suffers no want, who as far as it lies in their power alleviate his calamity, and before whom he may freely vent his complaints and sorrows—for such a one we shall undoubtedly feel sympathy; but this sympathy will not endure throughout; and at last we shrug our shoulders and recommend patience. Only when both cases are combined—when the solitary one possesses no control over his own body, when the sick man receives as little assistance from others as he can render himself, and his complaints are wafted away on the desert winds; then, and then only, do we see every misery that can afflict human nature close over the head of the unfortunate one; and then only does every fleeting thought, in which we picture ourselves in his situation, excite shrinking and horror. We see nothing save despair in its most horrible form before us; and no

office of a friend to share our sighs, but not of a foe. In short, the word *κακογείτονα* has been misunderstood. It has been rendered as if it were compounded of the adjective *κακός*, whereas it is compounded of the substantive *τὸ κακόν*. It has thus been translated "an evil companion," whilst the real meaning is "a companion of ill." In the same manner *κακόμαντις* does not signify a "bad," *i.e.* a "false, untrue prophet," but a "prophet of evil," nor *κακότεχνος* a "bad, unskilful artist," but one who used bad arts. By *a companion of ill* the poet intends either "one who is visited with the same calamities as ourselves," or "one who, through friendship, shares them with us;" the whole sentence, *οὐδ' ἔχων τιν' ἐγχώρων κακογείτονα*, therefore, should be translated, "neque quenquam indigenarum mali socium habens." Thomas Franklin, the last English translator of Sophokles, is evidently of my opinion, since he translates *κακογείτονα*, not by "bad neighbour," but merely by "fellow-mourner"—

> "Exposed to the inclement skies,
> Deserted and forlorn he lies,
> No friend nor fellow-mourner there,
> To soothe his sorrow and divide his care."

sympathy is so strong, none melts our whole soul so much, as that which entwines itself with the idea of despair. Of this kind is the sympathy that we feel for Philoktetes, and feel most strongly at the moment when we see him deprived of his bow, the only means he still possessed of prolonging his mournful existence. Oh, the Frenchman who had no understanding to consider this, no heart to feel it; or if he had, was mean enough to sacrifice it all to the wretched taste of his nation! Chateaubrun gives Philoktetes society. He makes a young princess come to him in his desert island; and even she does not come alone, but is accompanied by her governess, whom I know not whether princess or poet needed most. He has left out the whole of the striking scene where Philoktetes plays with his bow; and in its stead has introduced the play of beautiful eyes. Bows and arrows, I suppose, would have appeared but a merry sport to the hero youth of France; nothing, on the contrary, more serious than the scorn of beautiful eyes. The Greek racks us with the shocking apprehension that the miserable Philoktetes will be left on the island without his bow, and pitiably perish. The Frenchman knows a surer road to our hearts: he fills us with fear that the son of Achilles may have to depart without his princess. This the Parisian critics called triumphing over the ancients; and one of them proposed to name Chateaubrun's piece "La difficulté vaincue."[2]

3. After considering the effect of the whole piece, we must pass on to the single scenes, in which Philoktetes no longer appears as the abandoned sick man, but is in hopes of soon leaving the cheerless desert island and again reaching his kingdom; in which, therefore, the whole of his misfortune centres in his painful wound. He moans, he shrieks, he falls into the most horrible convulsions. Against this the objection of offended propriety is properly urged. It is an Englishman who raises it; a man therefore not lightly to be suspected of a false delicacy: and, as already hinted, he adduces very good reasons for his opinion. All feelings and passions, he says, with which others can but little sympathize become offensive

[2] Mercure de France, April 1755, p. 177.

if expressed with too much violence.[3] "It is for the same reason that to cry out with bodily pain, how intolerable soever, appears always unmanly and unbecoming. There is, however, a good deal of sympathy even with bodily pain. If I see a stroke aimed, and just ready to fall upon the leg or arm of another person, I naturally shrink, and draw back my own leg or my own arm; and when it does fall, I feel it in some measure, and am hurt by it, as well as the sufferer. My hurt, however, is no doubt exceedingly slight, and upon that account, if he makes any violent outcry, as I cannot go along with him, I never fail to despise him."[4] Nothing is more deceitful than laying down general laws for our feelings. Their web is so fine and complicated, that it is scarcely possible even for the most cautious speculation to take up clearly a single thread and follow it amidst all those which cross it. But if speculation does succeed, is any advantage gained? There are in nature no simple unmodified feelings; together with each a thousand others arise, the least of which is sufficient entirely to change the original sensation, so that exceptions multiply upon exceptions, until at last a supposed general law is reduced to a mere experience is some single cases. We despise a man, says the English-

[3] The Theory of Moral Sentiments, by Adam Smith, pt. i. sec. ii. ch. 1.

[4] [The translator hopes that the following additional quotation from Adam Smith will not be unacceptable to the reader:—

"In some of the Greek tragedies there is an attempt to excite compassion by the representation of the agencies of bodily pain. Philoctetes cries out and faints from the extremities of his sufferings. Hippolytus and Hercules are both introduced as expiring under the severest tortures, which, it seems, even the fortitude of Hercules was incapable of supporting. In all these cases, however, it is not the pain which interests us, but some other circumstance. It is not the sore foot, but the solitude, of Philoctetes which affects us, and diffuses over that charming tragedy that romantic wildness which is so agreeable to the imagination. The agonies of Hercules and Hippolytus are interesting only because we foresee that death is to be the consequence. If those heroes were to recover, we should think the representations of their sufferings perfectly ridiculous. What a tragedy would that be of which the distress consisted in a colic! Yet no pain is more exquisite. These attempts to excite compassion by the representation of bodily pain may be regarded as among the greatest breaches of decorum of which the Greek theatre has set the example."]

man, if we hear him cry out violently under bodily pain. But not always; not for the first time; not when we see that the sufferer makes every possible effort to suppress it; not when we know that he is in other respects a man of firmness; still less when we see him even in the midst of his distress afford proofs of his constancy; when we see that his pain can indeed compel him to shriek, but cannot force him a step further; when we see that he had rather subject himself to a prolongation of this pain than suffer his mode of thought or resolution to undergo the slightest alteration, even though he has reason to hope that by this change his pain would be brought altogether to an end. All this is found in the case of Philoktetes. Moral greatness consisted, among the Greeks, in an unalterable love of their friends, and undying hatred of their foes; and this greatness Philoktetes preserved through all his troubles. His eyes were not so dried up with pain that they had no tears to bestow upon the fate of his former friends; neither was his spirit so subdued by it that to obtain a release from it he could forgive his enemies and willingly lend himself to all their selfish ends. And were the Athenians to despise this rock of a man because the waves which were powerless to shake him could at least wring from him some sound? I confess I think that Cicero generally displays but little taste in his philosophy, and least of all in that part of the second book of the Tusculan Questions, where he puffs up the endurance of bodily pain. One would think he wanted to train a gladiator, so hot is his zeal against any expression of pain; in which he appears to find only a want of patience, without reflecting that it is often anything but voluntary, while true bravery can be exhibited in voluntary actions only. In Sophokles' play he hears nothing but Philoktetes' complaints and shrieks, and entirely overlooks his steadfast bearing in other respects. How else would he have found occasion for his rhetorical sally against the poets? "Their object surely is to render us effeminate, when they introduce the bravest men weeping." They must let them weep, for the theatre is no arena. It became the condemned or mercenary gladiator to do and suffer all with propriety. From him no sound of complaint was to be heard, in him no painful

convulsions seen; for since his wounds and death were intended to afford delight to the spectators, it was part of his art to conceal all pain. The least expression of it would have awakened sympathy; and sympathy, frequently awakened, would soon have put an end to these cold revolting spectacles. But to awaken the sensation, which was there forbidden, is the sole aim of the tragic stage. Its heroes must exhibit feeling, must express their pain, and let simple nature work within them. If they betray training and constraint, they leave our hearts cold, and prize fighters in the cothurnus at the most do but excite our wonder. Yet this epithet is merited by all the characters in the so-called tragedies of Seneca; and I am firmly convinced that the gladiatorial shows were the principal cause why the Romans always remained so far below mediocrity in the tragic art. The spectators learnt to misapprehend all nature at the bloody spectacles of the amphitheatre, where perhaps a Ktesias might have studied his art, but a Sophokles never could. The most truly tragic genius accustomed to these artificial scenes of death could not have failed to degenerate into bombast and rhodomontade: but such rhodomontade is as little capable of inspiring true heroism as Philoktetes' complaints of producing effeminacy. The complaints are those of a man, the actions those of a hero. The two combined constitute the human hero, who is neither effeminate nor hard, but now the one, now the other, as now nature, now principle and duty, require. He is the noblest production of wisdom, the highest object for the imitation of art.

4. Sophokles was not contented with having secured his sensitive Philoktetes from all contempt, but has wisely forestalled every objection which Adam Smith's remarks would warrant being raised against him. For although we do not always despise a man for crying out at bodily pain, it is indisputable that we do not feel so much sympathy for him as his cry appears to demand. How then ought the actors who are on the stage with the shrieking Philoktetes to demean themselves? Should they appear deeply moved, it would be contrary to nature; should they show themselves as cold and embarrassed as we are actually wont to be in such cases, an effect in the highest degree inharmonious would be produced upon the spectators.

But, as it has been said, Sophokles has provided against this also; he has imparted to the bystanders an interest of their own; the impression which Philoktetes' cry makes upon them is not the only thing which occupies them: the attention of the spectators, therefore, is not so much arrested by the disproportion of their sympathy with this cry as by the change which, through this sympathy, be it weak or strong, takes place, or ought to take place, in the sentiments and designs of these bystanders. Neoptolemus and the chorus have deceived the unfortunate Philoktetes. They see into what despair their deceit may plunge him; then his terrible malady assails him before their very eyes. Though this seizure may not be capable of exciting any remarkable degree of sympathy in them, it may induce them to look into their own conduct, to pay some regard to so much misery, and to feel reluctance to heighten it by their treachery. This the spectator expects, and his expectations are not deceived by the noble-spirited Neoptolemus. Philoktetes, if he had been master of his pain, would have confirmed Neoptolemus in his dissimulation: Philoktetes, rendered by pain incapable of all dissimulation, however necessary it may seem, to prevent his fellow-travellers from too soon repenting of their promise to take him home with them, by his naturalness brings back Neoptolemus to his nature. This conversion is excellent, and the more moving because it is brought about by mere humanity. In the Frenchman's drama, the beautiful eyes again play their part in it.[5] But I will think no more of this parody. In the Trachiniæ, Sophokles has resorted to the same artifice of uniting some other emotion in the bystanders with the sympathy which should be called out by hearing a cry of pain. The pain of Hercules is not merely a wearing one. It drives him to madness in which he pants after nothing but revenge. Already he has in this fury seized Lichas, and dashed him to pieces against the rocks. The chorus is composed of women, and for that reason is naturally filled with fear and horror. These, and the suspense arising from the doubt whether a god will yet hasten to the aid of Hercules, or whether he will be left to sink under his misfortunes,

[5] Act. ii. sc. 3: "De mes déguisements, que penserait Sophie?" says the son of Achilles.

here create that proper universal interest to which sympathy imparts but a light shading. As soon as the event is decided by the assistance of the oracle, Hercules becomes quiet, and admiration at the resolution he has finally displayed occupies the place of all other emotions. But, in the general comparison of the suffering Hercules with the suffering Philoktetes, we must not forget that the one is a demi-god, the other only a man. The man is ashamed of no complaints, while the demi-god is indignant at finding that his mortal part has such power over his immortal, that it can compel him to weep and moan like a girl.[6] We moderns do not believe in demi-gods, and yet expect that the commonest hero should act and feel like one.

That an actor can carry imitation of the shrieks and convulsions of pain as far as illusion I do not venture either positively to deny or assert. If I found that our actors could not, I should first inquire whether Garrick also would find it impossible; and if my question were answered in the affirmative, I should still be at liberty to suppose that the acting and declamation of the ancients attained a perfection of which we can at this day form no conception.

CHAPTER V.

THERE are critics of antiquity who, on the ground that Virgil's description must have served as a model for the group of the Laokoon, maintain that the latter was indeed the work of Greek sculptors, who, however, flourished in the time of the emperors. Of the ancient scholars who supported this opinion, I will now mention only Bartholomæus Marliani,[1] and of the modern, Montfaucon.[2]

[6] Trach. v. 1071: *ὅστις ὥστε παρθένος*
βέβρυχα κλαίων.

[1] Topographiæ Urbis Romanæ, lib. iv. cap. 14: "Et quanquam hi (Agesander et Polydorus et Athenodorus Rhodii) ex Virgilii descriptione statuam hanc formavisse videntur," &c.

[2] Suppl. aux Ant. Expliq. vol. i. p. 242: "Il semble qu'Agesandre, Polydore et Athénodore, qui en furent les ouvriers, ayant travaillé comme à l'envie, pour laisser un monument, qui répondait à l'incomparable description qu'a fait Virgile de Laocoon," &c.

They found, without doubt, an agreement so peculiar, between the work of art and the description of the poet, that they believed it impossible that both should by chance have lighted upon the same circumstances; circumstances, too, of such a nature that they would be the last to force themselves upon the mind. They therefore assumed that, if the question of originality and priority of invention is raised, there is a stronger presumption in favour of the poet than of the artist.

Only they appear to have forgotten that a third alternative is left: that the poet may have copied as little from the artist as the artist from the poet, and both have drawn from a common ancient source, which, according to Macrobius, was probably Peisander.[3] For when the works of this Greek poet were still exant, it was a piece of mere schoolboy knowledge ("pueris decantatum"), that the Roman poet not only imitated, but, as might be said with more truth still, faithfully translated from him, the entire account of the conquest and destruction of Ilium, which constitutes the whole of the second book. Thus, if Virgil had followed Peisander in the story of Laokoon also, the Greek artists would have had no need to seek the guidance of a Latin poet; and the conjecture as to the period to which the work belongs is without foundation.

But if I were compelled to maintain the opinion of Marliani and Montfaucon, I should like to lend them the following means of escaping from this difficulty. Peisander's poems are lost, and we cannot say with certainty what

[3] Saturnal. lib. v. cap. 2: "[Non parva sunt alia,] quæ Virgilius traxit a Græcis, [et carmini suo tanquam illic nata inseruit.] Dicturumne me putatis quæ vulgo nota sunt? quod Theocritum sibi fecerit pastoralis operis autorem, ruralis Hesiodum? et quod in ipsis Georgicis tempestatis serenitatisque signa de Arati phænomenis traxerit? vel quod eversionem Trojæ, cum Sinone suo, et equo ligneo, cæterisque omnibus quæ librum secundum faciunt, a Pisandro pæne ad verbum transcripserit? qui inter Græcos poetas eminet opere, quod a nuptiis Jovis et Junonis incipiens universas historias, quæ mediis omnibus sæculis, usque ad ætatem ipsius Pisandri contigerunt, in unam seriem coactas redegerit, et unum ex diversis hiatibus temporum corpus effecerit? In quo opere inter historias cæteras interitus quoque Trojæ in hunc modum relatus est. Quæ fideliter Maro interpretando, fabricatus est sibi Iliacæ urbis ruinam. Sed et hæc et talia ut pueris decantata prætereo."

was his version of the story of Laokoon; but it is probable that it was the same as that of which we still find traces in the Greek authors. This, however, has as little as possible in common with the narrative of Virgil, who must, therefore, have entirely recast the Greek tradition according to his own ideas. On this supposition his account of the misfortune of Laokoon is his own invention; and consequently, if the artists in their representation are in harmony with him, it is natural to suppose that they lived after his time, and executed their group after his model.

Quintus Calaber, it is true, agrees with Virgil in making Laokoon exhibit a suspicion of the wooden horse; but the anger of Minerva, drawn upon the priest for so doing, is wreaked upon him in a completely different manner. The ground trembles beneath the feet of the warning Trojan; terror and anguish take possession of him; a burning pain rages in his eyes; his brain suffers; he goes mad; he is struck with blindness. Then when, in spite of his blindness, he ceases not to counsel the burning of the wooden horse, Minerva at length sends two terrible serpents, which, however, seize upon his children only. In vain they stretch out their hands towards their father. The poor blind man can afford them no aid; they are torn in pieces, and the serpents disappear under the earth. Laokoon himself, however, suffers no injury from them, and that this version is not peculiar to Quintus,[4] but, on the contrary, was commonly received, is proved by a passage from Lykophron, in which he bestows on the serpents[5] the epithet of "child-eaters."

But if this had been the version commonly adopted by the Greeks, Greek artists would hardly have ventured to deviate from it; or, if they had, could scarcely have chanced to do so in exactly the same manner as a Roman poet, unless they had been previously acquainted with him, or perhaps had received an express commission to take his description as their model. On this point, I think, a defender of Montfaucon and Marliani cannot

[4] Paralip. xii. 383.

[5] Or rather on the serpent, for Lykophron mentions one only:—
καὶ παιδοβρῶτος πορκέως νήσους διπλᾶς.

insist too strongly. Virgil is the first and only author who makes the serpents kill the father as well as children.[6] The sculptors do this likewise; which,

[6] I do not forget that the picture, on which Eumolpus expatiates in Petronius, might be cited on the opposite side of the question. It represented the destruction of Troy, and particularly the story of Laokoon, under precisely the same circumstances which Virgil has recounted: and since it stood in the same gallery at Naples, in which were some other ancient pictures by Zeuxis, Protogenes, and Apelles, it also might reasonably be supposed to have been an old Greek painting. Only I must be permitted to suggest that a novel writer is no historian. This gallery, this picture, this Eumolpus, seem never to have existed anywhere, save in the imagination of Petronius. Nothing betrays the entire fiction more plainly than the manifest traces of an almost schoolboy imitation of Virgil's description. It is worth while instituting the comparison. The following passage is from Virgil (Æneid, ii. 199):—

> "Hic aliud majus miseris multoque tremendum
> Objicitur magis, atque improvida pectora turbat.
> Laocoon, ductus Neptuno sorte sacerdos,
> Sollemnis taurum ingentem mactabat ad aras.
> Ecce autem gemini a Tenedo tranquilla per alta—
> Horresco referens—immensis orbibus angues
> Incumbunt pelago, pariterque ad litora tendunt;
> Pectora quorum inter fluctus arrecta jubæque
> Sanguineæ superant undas, pars cetera pontum
> Pone legit, sinuatque immensa volumine terga.
> Fit sonitus, spumante salo. Jamque arva tenebant,
> Ardentesque oculos suffecti sanguine et igni
> Sibila lambebant linguis vibrantibus ora.
> Diffugimus visu exsangues: illi agmine certo
> Laocoonta petunt. Et primum parva duorum
> Corpora natorum serpens amplexus uterque
> Implicat, et miseros morsu depascitur artus;
> Post ipsum, auxilio subeuntem et tela ferentem
> Corripiunt, spirisque ligant ingentibus; et jam
> Bis medium amplexi, bis collo squamea circum
> Terga dati, superant capite et cervicibus altis.
> Ille simul manibus tendit divellere nodos,
> Perfusus sanie vittas atroque veneno,
> Clamores simul horrendos ad sidera tollit;
> Quales mugitus, fugit cum saucius aram
> Taurus, et incertam excussit cervice securim."

So also Eumolpus; for we may say of him, as of all other improvisatori, that they are at least as much indebted to their memory for their verses as to their imagination:—

> "Ecce alia monstra. Celsa qua Tenedos mare
> Dorso repellit, tumida consurgunt freta,

seeing that they were Greeks, it would have been unnatural to expect they should; Virgil's description, therefore, probably suggested it.

Undaque resultat scissa tranquillo minor.
Qualis silenti nocte remorum sonus
Longe refertur, cum premunt classes mare,
Polsumque marmor abiete imposita gemit.
Respicimus, angues orbibus geminis ferunt
Ad saxa fluctus: tumida quorum pectora
Rates ut altæ, lateribus spumas agunt:
Dat cauda sonitum; liberæ ponto jubæ
Coruscant luminibus, fulmineum jubar
Incendit æquor, sibilisque undæ tremunt.
Stupuere mentes. Infulis stabant sacri
Phrygioque cultu gemina nati pignora
Laocoonte, quos repente tergoribus ligant
Angues corusci: parvulas illi manus
Ad ora referunt: neuter auxilio sibi,
Uterque fratri transtulit pias vices,
Morsque ipsa miseros mutuo perdit metu.
Accumulat ecce liberum funus parens,
Infirmus auxiliator: invadunt virum
Jam morte pasti, membraque ad terram trahunt
Jacet sacerdos inter aras victima."

The principal features in both passages are the same, and different ideas are expressed in similar words. But these are trifles which strike the eye at once; there are other signs of imitation which, though less palpable, are no less certain. If the imitator is a man who has any confidence in himself, he rarely imitates without attempting to beautify; and if this endeavour is, in his opinion, successful, he is fox enough to sweep out with his tail the footsteps which might betray the path by which he had come. But even this vain desire to beautify, and this caution taken to appear original, betray him; for the beautifying process results in exaggeration and unnatural refinement: Virgil says "sanguineæ jubæ"; Petronius, "liberæ jubæ luminibus coruscant." Virgil has "ardentes oculos suffecti sanguine et igni"; Petronius, "fulmineum jubar incendit æquor"; Virgil, "fit sonitus spumante salo"; Petronius, "sibilis undæ tremunt." Thus the plagiarist always passes from the great to the monstrous, and from the marvellous to the impossible. The description of the boys being encircled by the serpent-folds is in Virgil a *parergon*, drawn by a few expressive strokes, which tell only of their helplessness and distress. Petronius turns this sketch into a finished picture, and makes the two boys a pair of heroic souls:—

"Neuter auxilio sibi
Uterque fratri transtulit pias vices
Morsque ipsa miseros mutuo perdit metu."

I am fully conscious how far this probability falls short of historical certainty. But, though I intend to draw no further historical conclusion from it, I think it is, at the least, admissible as an hypothesis, on which a critic may be allowed to base his observations. Whether then it is proved, or not, that the sculptors took Virgil's description for their model, I shall merely assume it for the sake of inquiring how they would in that case have executed their task. I have already clearly expressed my opinions upon the subject of the shriek; and perhaps a further comparison may lead to no less instructive observations.

The idea of connecting the father and his two sons in one knot, by means of the murderous serpents, is undeniably a happy one, and evinces an artistic imagination of no ordinary power. To whom is the credit of it due? To the poet, or the artists? Montfaucon affirms that he can-

Such self-denial is not expected from either children or men. How much better the Greek understood nature (Quintus Calaber, xii. 459) when he makes even the mothers forget their children at the appearance of the horrible serpents; so completely were the efforts of all turned towards their own preservation—

. . . . ἔνθα γυναῖκες
Οἴμωζον, καὶ πού τις ἑῶν ἐπελήσατο τέκνων,
Αὐτὴ ἀλευομένη στυγερὸν μόρον.

Another device for hiding their imitation, very common among plagiarists, is that of changing the shadows in the original into lights in the copy, and on the other hand throwing the lights into the background. Virgil takes some pains to render the size of the serpents palpable, because it is on this immense size that the probability of the following scene depends: the noise they cause is but a subordinate idea, intended to beget a more vivid conception of it. Petronius, on the contrary, converts this subordinate idea into a prominent feature, describes the noise with great prolixity, and forgets the size so completely that we are almost left to infer it from the sound. It is difficult to believe that he could have fallen into this impropriety, if he had drawn his description from imagination solely, and had had no pattern before him, from which he borrowed his design, though anxious at the same time to conceal his plagiarism. Indeed we may hold it to be a rule that every poetical picture which is overladen in its less important features, while deficient in its weightier, is an unsuccessful imitation; nor can the conclusion be affected by its possessing many lighter beauties, or our being able or unable to indicate the original.

not find it in the poet's work;[7] but I think he has not read him with sufficient attention.

"Illi agmine certo
Laocoonta petunt, et primum parva duorum
Corpora natorum serpens amplexus uterque
Implicat, et miseros morsu depascitur artus.
Post ipsum, auxilio subeuntem et tela ferentem
Corripiunt, spirisque ligant ingentibus."

The poet has described the serpents as of wonderful length. They have wound their folds round the boys, and, when the father comes to the aid of his sons, they seize upon him also ("corripiunt"). Owing to the size they are represented as being, they could not at once have unwound themselves from the sons. There must, therefore, have been a moment when they had already attacked the father with their heads and fore parts, while the folds of their tails still encircled his children. This moment is necessary in the progress of the poetical picture; the poet allows us to become completely conscious of it, but this was not precisely the time for depicting it in detail. That the old commentators actually detected it seems to be shown by a passage in Donatus.[8] How much less likely, then, would it be to escape the notice of artists, upon whose penetrating sight everything that can be of advantage to them bursts with such speed and significance.

Though the poet describes Laokoon as fettered by so

[7] Suppl. aux Antiq. Expl. t. i. p. 243: "Il y a quelque petite différence entre ce que dit Virgile, et ce que le marbre représente. Il semble, selon ce que dit le poëte, que les serpents quittèrent les deux enfants pour venir entortiller le père, au lieu que, dans ce marbre, ils lient en même temps les enfants et leur père."

[8] Donatus ad v. 227, lib. ii. Æneid: "Mirandum non est, clypeo et simulacri vestigiis tegi potuisse, quos supra et longos et validos dixit, et multiplici ambitu circumdedisse Laocoontis corpus ac liberorum, et fuisse superfluam partem." It appears to me, in regard to this passage, that either the *non* at the beginning of the sentence must be omitted, or else that an entire dependent clause is wanting at the end. For since the serpents were of such an extraordinary size, it is certainly to be wondered at that they could hide themselves under the shield of the goddess; unless the shield were itself very large, and belonged to a colossal statue. The confirmation of this supposition was doubtlessly contained in the missing consequent clause, or the *non* has no meaning.

many serpent coils, he carefully avoids mentioning the arms, and thus leaves his hands in perfect freedom.

"Ille simul manibus tendit divellere nodos."

In this the artists necessarily had to follow his example. Nothing adds so much expression and life to a figure as the movement of the hands; in the case of the passions especially, the most speaking face is meaningless without it. Had the arms been fast locked to the bodies by the folds of the serpents, they would have spread torpor and death over the whole group. They are therefore seen in full play, both in the principal figure and in those with it; and their activity is greatest where the pain is most violent.

But this freedom of the hands was the only point in the coiling of the serpents that the artist could have borrowed with advantage from the poet. Virgil tells us that the monsters wound themselves twice round both the body and neck of their victim, while their heads towered high above him.

"Bis medium amplexi, bis collo squamea circum
Terga dati, superant capite et cervicibus altis."

Now this picture satisfies the imagination excellently; the noblest parts of the body are compressed to suffocation, and the poison flows directly up to the face; yet, in spite of this, it was no picture for the artist, whose object was to exhibit in the body the pain and workings of the poison. Now, to enable us to perceive these, the upper parts of the frame had to be left as free as possible, and all external pressure avoided, by which the play of the suffering nerves and working muscles might be weakened and diverted. The twofold coils of the serpents would have concealed the whole body, and left that painful contraction of the stomach, which is so expressive, altogether invisible. Those parts of the body which would have been still exposed above, below, or between the folds, would have been seen amidst compressions and distensions, the effect not of inward pain but of external pressure. Again, by the neck being twice encircled, that pyramidal culmination of the group, which is so pleasing to the eye, would have been entirely destroyed; and the

pointed heads of the serpents, projecting from the mass and shooting into the air, would have produced such a sudden falling off in proportion that the form of the whole would have become offensive in the extreme. There are designers who have been foolish enough, in spite of this, to adhere closely to the poet. To take one example among several, we may learn with repugnance the effect of such an imitation from a drawing by Frank Cleyn.[9] The ancient sculptors saw at a glance that in this case their art required an absolute difference of treatment; they removed all the coils from the body and neck to the thighs and feet. Here they could conceal and squeeze as much as was necessary, without causing any detriment to the expression. Here, moreover, they awakened the idea of suddenly checked flight, and of a kind of immobility, which is of the greatest advantage to the artificial prolongation of the same attitude.

I know not how it has happened that this obvious difference in the coiling of the serpents, between the work of art and the description of the poet, has been passed over in complete silence by the critics. It exalts the wisdom of the artists just as much as the other difference, which they have all remarked, but have sought to justify rather than ventured to approve. I mean the difference in respect to drapery. The Laokoon of Virgil is arrayed in his priestly garments; while in the group both he and his sons appear entirely naked. There are some who have detected a gross absurdity in a king's son and a priest officiating at a sacrifice being thus represented. And to these objectors the critics of art answer in all seriousness that to be sure it is an error against conventionality, but that the artists were forced into it because they could not attire their figures in becoming robes. Sculpture, say they, cannot imitate any stuffs; thick folds produce a bad effect; out of two evils therefore we must choose the least, and

[9] In the splendid (large folio) edition of Dryden's Virgil (published in London 1697). And even in this picture the serpents are only coiled once round the body, and scarcely at all round the neck. If so mediocre an artist require any further justification, the only plea that can be urged in his favour is that prints are intended to serve merely as illustrations of the text, and are not to be looked on as independent works of art.

rather run counter to truth itself than offend in respect to the drapery.[10] If the ancient artists would have smiled at the objection, I know not what they would have said to the reply. Art could not be reduced to a lower level than it is by this defence. For supposing that sculpture could have imitated the difference of texture as well as painting, would it have been necessary for the Laokoon to have been draped? Should we have lost nothing beneath this drapery? Has a garment, the work of a slavish hand, as much beauty as an organic body, the work of everlasting Wisdom? Does it demand the same powers? Is it of the same merit? Is it equally honourable to imitate the one as the other? Is deception all that our eyes require? Is it of no importance to them by what they are deceived?

In poetry a garment is no garment; it conceals nothing. Our imagination sees everything beneath it. Laokoon may have robes in Virgil or not, his sufferings are visible to the imagination in every part of the body, as much in one case as in the other. It sees indeed the priestly fillet encircle his brow, but the brow is not hidden. Nay, this fillet is not only no hindrance, it even strengthens the idea which we form of the calamity of the sufferer :—

"Perfusus sanie vittas atroque veneno."

[10] This is the judgment of De Piles himself in his notes to Du Fresnoy, v. 210 : "Remarquez s'il vous plaît, que les draperies tendres et légères, n'étant données qu'au sexe féminin, les anciens seulpteurs ont évité, autant qu'ils ont pu, d'habiller les figures d'hommes; parce qu'ils ont pensé, comme nous avons déjà dit, qu'en seulpture on ne pouvait imiter les étoffes et que les gros plis faisaient un mauvais effet. Il y a presque autant d'exemples de cette vérité, qu'il y a parmi les antiques de figures d'hommes nuds. Je rapporterai seulement celui du Laocoon, lequel selon la vraisemblanee devrait être vêtu. En effet, quelle apparenee y a-t-il qu'un fils de Roi, qu'un prêtre d'Apollon se trouvât tout nud dans la cérémonie actuelle d'un sacrifiee; car les serpents passèrent de l'île de Ténédos au rivage de Troye, et surprirent Laocoon et ses fils dans le temps même qu'il sacrifiait à Neptune sur le bord de la mer, comme le marque Virgile dans le seeond livre de son Énéide. Cependant les Artistes qui sont les auteurs de ce bel ouvrage ont bien vu, qu'ils ne pouvaient pas leur donner de vêtements convenables à leur qualité, sans faire comme un amas de pierres, dont le masse ressemblerait à un rocher, au lieu des trois admirables figures, qui ont été et qui sont toujours l'admiration des sièeles. C'est pour cela que, de deux inconvénients, ils ont jugé celui des draperies beaucoup plus fâeheux que celui d'aller eontre la vérité même."

His priestly dignity avails him not, even its emblem, that which above everything wins him respect and honour, is drenched and polluted by the poisoned foam. But the artist must resign these subordinate ideas if the main subject is not to suffer. Had he left Laokoon only this fillet, he would in a great degree have weakened the expression; for the brow, which is the seat of it, would have been in part concealed. Thus, as formerly in the case of the shriek, he sacrificed expression to beauty, he here offers up conventionality to expression. Conventionality was especially but lightly esteemed by the ancients. They felt that the highest aim of their art led to its complete rejection. Beauty is that highest aim: necessity invented garments; and what has art in common with necessity? I grant that there is also a beauty in drapery, but can it be compared with that of the human form? And shall he who can attain to the greater rest content with the less? I much fear that the most perfect master in drapery shows by that very talent wherein his weakness lies.

CHAPTER VI.

My hypothesis, that the artists have imitated the poet, does not amount to a disparagement of them. Nay, through this imitation, their wisdom is shown in the most favourable light. They followed the poet, without suffering themselves to be misled by him even in the merest trifles. They were indeed furnished with their design, but, since this design had to be transferred from one art to another, they found ample opportunity for the exercise of original thought. And the original ideas, displayed in their deviations from their model, are a proof that they excelled in their own art as much as the poet in his.

I will now invert my hypothesis, and assume that the poet has copied the artists. There are scholars who maintain that this is the truth,[1] but I cannot discover that they

[1] Maffei, Richardson, and more lately still Herr von Hagedorn (Betrachtungen über die Malerei, p. 37. Richardson, Traité de la Peinture, tome iii. p. 513). De Fontaines scarcely deserves to be added

have any historical grounds for such a belief. They probably looked upon the group as so supremely beautiful that they could not persuade themselves it belonged to the late period to which it is usually ascribed; it must, they thought, have belonged to the age when art was in its fullest bloom, since that alone seemed worthy of it.

It has been shown that, excellent as Virgil's description is, there are several features in it of which the artist could make no use. This conclusion limits the general principle, "that a good poetical picture will necessarily produce an equally good material painting; and that a poet's description is only so far good as the artist can follow it in all its details." This limitation one is inclined to assume, even before we see it confirmed by examples, if we simply consider the wide sphere of poetry, the boundless field of our imagination, and the spirituality of its images; a great and various throng of which can be placed in the closest juxtaposition, without concealing or disfiguring each other, which perhaps would be the effect that the objects themselves, or their natural symbols, would produce in the narrow limits of space and time.

But if the less cannot contain the greater, the less can be comprised in the greater. I mean, although each trait of which the descriptive poet avails himself need not necessarily have as good effect upon the other surface, or in marble, yet could not every detail of which the artist avails himself be just as effective in the work of the poet? Indisputably! for that which is beautiful in a work of art is beautiful not to our eyes but to our imagination, affected by their means. Thus, as the same image may be raised afresh in our imagination by means either of arbitrary or natural symbols, so the same pleasure, though not the same degree of it, must on each occasion be again excited.

But, admitting this, I must acknowledge that to me the supposition that Virgil imitated the artists appears far more incomprehensible than its converse. If the artists

to this list. He maintains certainly in the notes to his translation of Virgil that the poet had the group in his mind; but he is ignorant enough to assert that it is the work of Pheidias.

have copied the poet, I can account and answer for all their deviations from him: they were compelled to deviate, for the very details, which would have offended against harmony in them, found harmonious expression in the other. But there is no cause for the deviation of the poet. If in each and every point he had faithfully followed the group, would he not still have transmitted to us a most excellent picture?[2] I well understand how his

[2] I cannot refer to anything more decisive, in this respect, than the poem of Sadoleto. It is worthy of an ancient poet, and, since it may well serve instead of an engraving, I venture upon inserting it whole.

"DE LAOCOONTIS STATUA JACOBI SADOLETI CARMEN.

Ecce alto terræ e cumulo, ingentisque ruinæ
Visceribus, iterum redueem longinqua reduxit
Laocoonta dies. Aulis regalibus olim
Qui stetit, atque tuos ornabat, Tite, penates.
Divinæ simulaerum artis, nec doeta vetustas
Nobilius spectabat opus, nunc celsa revisit
Exemptum tenebris redivivæ mœnia Romæ.
Quid primum summumve loquar? miserumne parentem
Et prolem geminam? an sinuatos flexibus angues
Terribili aspectu? caudasque irasque draconum
Vulneraque et veros, saxo moriente, dolores?
Horret ad hæc animus, mutaque ab imagine pulsat
Pectora non parvo pietas commixta tremori.
Prolixum bini spiris glomerantur in orbem
Ardentes colubri, et sinuosis orbibus errant,
Ternaque multiplici constringunt corpora nexu.
Vix oculi sufferre valent, crudele tuendo
Exitium, casusque feros: micat alter, et ipsum
Laocoonta petit, totum que infraque supraque
Implicat et rabido tandem ferit ilia morsu.
Connexum refugit corpus, torquentia sese
Membra, latusque retro sinuatum a vulnere cernas.
Ille dolore acri, et laniatu impulsus acerbo,
Dat genitum ingentem, crudosque evellere dentes
Connixus, lævam impatiens ad terga Chelydri
Objicit: intendunt nervi, collectaque ab omni
Corpore vis frustra summis conatibus instat.
Ferre nequit rabiem, et de vulnere murmur anhelum est
At serpens lapsu crebro redeunte subintrat
Lubricus, intortoque ligat genua infima nodo.
Absistunt suræ, spirisque prementibus aretum
Crus tumet, obsepto turgent vitalia pulsu,
Liventesque atro distendunt sanguine venas.
Nec minus in natos eadem vis effera sævit
Implexuque angit rapido, miserandaque membra

imagination, working of its own accord, could lead him to this or that detail, but I cannot conceive any reason why his judgment should feel itself compelled to change the beautiful details which were already before his eyes for others. I think, too, that if Virgil had had the group of Laokoon for a model, he would hardly have been able to put such restraint upon himself as to have left as it were to mere conjecture the entanglement of all three bodies in a single knot. It would have struck his eyes too vividly; he would have experienced from it an effect too excellent not to have brought it more prominently forward in his description. I have said that this was not precisely the time for depicting this entanglement in detail.[3] No; but the addition of a single word might easily, we may conceive, have distinctly expressed it without removing it

"Dilacerat; jamque alterius depasta cruentum
Pectus, suprema genitorem voce cientis,
Circumjectu orbis, validoque volumine fulcit.
Alter adhuc nullo violatus corpora morsu,
Dum parat adducta caudam divellere planta,
Horret ad aspectum miseri patris, hæret in illo,
Et jam jam ingentes fletus, lachrymasque cadentes
Anceps in dubio retinet timor. Ergo perenni
Qui tantum statuistis opus jam laude nitentes,
Artifices magni (quanquam et melioribus actis
Quæritur æternum nomen, multoque licebat
Clarius ingenium venturæ tradere famæ)
Attamen ad laudem quæcunque oblata facultas
Egregium hanc rapere, et summa ad fastigia niti.
Vos rigidum lapidem vivis animare figuris
Eximii, et vivos spirauti in marmore sensus
Inserere, aspicimus motumque iramque doloremque,
Et pene audimus gemitus: vos extulit olim
Clara Rhodos, vestræ jacuerunt artis honores
Tempore ab immenso, quos rursum in luce secunda
Roma videt, celebratque frequens: operisque vetusti
Gratia parta recens. Quanto præstantius ergo est
Ingenio, aut quovis extendere fata labore,
Quam fastus et opes et inanem extendere luxum."

(V. Leodegarii a Quereu Farrago Poematum, T. ii. p. 63.) Gruter also has inserted this poem, together with some others of Sadolet's, in his well-known collection (Delic. Poet. Italorum. Parte alt. p. 582). His version, however, is very inaccurate; *e.g.* for bini, v. 14, he reads vivi: for errant, v. 15, oram, &c.

[3] [See p. 39, *above*.]

from that background in which the poet was obliged to leave it. What the artist could express without this word would not have been left unexpressed by the poet had he already seen it put forward by the artist.

The artist had the most urgent reasons for not allowing the suffering of Laokoon to break forth into a cry, but if the poet had had before him in the work of art so moving a union of pain and beauty, was there anything to oblige him to pass by so completely the manly dignity and high-souled patience which this union suggests, and to shock us at once with the horrible shriek of his Laokoon? Richardson says, "Virgil's Laokoon was obliged to shriek, because it was the poet's aim not so much to excite compassion for him as alarm and horror among the Trojans." I will allow it, although Richardson does not appear to have reflected that the poet does not give this narrative in his own person, but represents Æneas as relating it, and relating it in the presence of Dido, upon whose sympathy he could not work too strongly. However, it is not the shriek which surprises me, but the absence of all that gradation in introducing it to which the poet must have been led had he, as we are assuming, had the work of art for his model. Richardson adds,[4] "The story of Laokoon is only intended as a prelude to the pathethic description of the final destruction of the city; the poet, therefore, abstained from making it more interesting, that our attention, which this last horrible night fully demands, might not be previously engrossed by the misfortune of a single citizen." But that is attempting to look at the whole scene from the picturesque point of view from which it cannot possibly be viewed. The misfortune of Laokoon and the destruction of the city are not, with the poet, connected pictures. The two form no whole such as our eyes either could or ought to take in together at a glance, in which case only would there be a fear that our mind should dwell more upon Laokoon than upon the burning town.

[4] De la Peinture, tome iii. p. 516: "C'est l'horreur que les Troïens ont conçue contre Laocoon, qui était nécessaire à Virgile pour la conduite de son Poëme; et cela le mène à cette description pathétique de la destruction de la patrie de son héros. Aussi Virgile n'avait garde de diviser l'attention sur la dernière nuit, pour une grande ville entière, par la peinture d'un petit malheur d'un Particulier."

The description of the one follows upon that of the other, and, however affecting the first may be, I do not see what disparagement it can bring upon its successor, unless it be that in itself the second is not sufficiently pathetic.

The poet would have had less reason still for altering the coils of the serpents. In the work of art they occupy the hands and confine the feet of their victims. Pleasing as is this arrangement to the eyes, so the image of it which is left upon the imagination is vivid. Indeed it is so expressive and clear that the representation of it by words is but little weaker than its material representation.

> "Micat alter, et ipsum
> Laocoonta petit, totumque infraque supraque
> Implicat, et rabido tandem ferit ilia morsu.
>
> At serpens lapsu crebro redeunte subintrat
> Lubricus, intortoque ligat genua infima nodo."

These are lines of Sadoleto's, which without doubt would have come more graphically from Virgil, if a visible model had fired his imagination, and which then would certainly have been better than those he has now left us in their place:—

> "Bis medium amplexi, bis collo squamea circum
> Terga dati, superant capite et cervicibus altis."

These traits certainly fill our imagination, but it must not be allowed to dwell upon them; it must not attempt to realize them; it must look at one time only on the serpents, at another only on Laokoon; it must not seek to image to itself the group which the two produce together; as soon as it thinks on this it begins to be offended by Virgil's picture, and finds it highly inartistic.

But even if the alterations which Virgil had made in a borrowed model were not unhappy, still they would have been merely arbitrary. Imitation is an effort to produce a resemblance, but can a person be said to aim at this whose changes overstep the line of necessity? Further, when a man thus exceeds, it is clear that it is not his

design to produce resemblance; that, therefore, he has not imitated.

Not the whole, it might be answered, but perhaps this or that part. Suppose it so; still, which are these single parts in which the harmony between the description and the work of art is so close that the poet might appear to have borrowed them from it? The father, the children, the serpents, all these did legend transmit to the poet no less than to the artist. Setting aside what was traditional, they do not agree in anything except in this, that both entangle father and children in a single serpent-knot. But the idea of this arose from the altered circumstance of the father's being smitten with exactly the same calamity as his children. This alteration, however, as was mentioned above, appears to have been made by Virgil,[5] for the Greek tradition gives an entirely different account. Consequently, if in consideration of this entanglement being common to both we must assume an imitation on the one side or the other, it is more natural to do so on the side of the artist than on that of the poet In every other respect the one differs from the other, only with this distinction, that if it is the artist who has made these changes, they are still compatible with an intention of imitating the poet, because the end and limits of his art compelled him to them; if, on the contrary, the poet should be thought to have imitated the artist, all the above-mentioned deviations are proofs against this pretended imitation; and those who, in spite of them, continue to support it, can only mean that they believe the work of art must be of greater antiquity than the description of the poet.

CHAPTER VII.

When it is said that the artist imitates the poet, or the poet the artist, two different meanings may be conveyed. Either the one makes the work of the other the actual object of his imitation, or the two have the same object, and the one borrows from the other the way and manner of imitating it

[5] [See p. 36, *above*.]

When Virgil describes the shield of Æneas, he imitates the artist, who made it, according to the first signification of the term. The work of art, not what is represented upon it, is the object of his imitation; and even though he does describe at the same time what is seen set forth upon it, he describes it as a part of the shield, and not as the thing itself. If Virgil, on the contrary, had imitated the group of Laokoon, this would have been an imitation of the second kind, for he would not have imitated the group itself, but what that group represented; borrowing from the former the features only of his imitation.

In the first kind of imitation the poet is original, in the second he is a plagiarist. The first is a part of that universal imitation, of which the essence of his art consists, and he works as a genius; his subject may be the work either of another art, or of Nature herself. The second, on the contrary, degrades him altogether from his dignity; instead of the thing itself, he imitates imitations of it, and offers us cold reminiscences of the traits of another man's genius, for original features of his own.

If, however, the poet and the artist cannot help frequently contemplating those objects, which are common to both, from the same point of view, it must happen that in many cases their imitations harmonize, without the least copying or rivalry between the two having taken place. These coincidences between contemporaneous artists and poets, in the case of things which are no longer existent, may lead to mutual illustration. But to push this kind of illustration to such refinements that coincidence is converted into design; and to impute to the poet, especially in every trifle, a reference to this statue or that painting, is to render him a very doubtful service; and not him alone, but the reader also, to whom the most beautiful passages are by these means rendered, if you will, very significant, but at the same time terribly cold.

This is at once the aim and the error of a well-known English writer. Spence wrote his 'Polymetis'[1] with a

[1] The first edition is of 1747, the second of 1755, and bears the title 'Polymetis, or An inquiry concerning the agreement between the works of the Roman poets and the remains of the ancient artists, being an attempt to illustrate them mutually from one another. In

great deal of classical learning, and an intimate acquaintance with the extant works of ancient art. In his design of illustrating by these the Roman poets, and of extracting from them, in return, a solution of hitherto unexplained ancient works of art, he has often succeeded happily. But, in spite of this, I maintain that his book must be absolutely intolerable to every reader of taste.

It is natural, when Valerius Flaccus describes the winged lightning upon the Roman shields—

> "(Nec primus radios, miles Romane, corusci
> Fulminis et rutilas scutis diffuderis alas),"

that this description should appear far more full of meaning to me if I see the representation of such a shield upon an old monument.[2] It is quite possible that the ancient armourers may, on their helmets and shields, have represented Mars in that hovering posture above Rhea in which Addison believed he saw him on a coin;[3] and that

ten books, by the Rev. Mr. Spence, London, printed for Dodsley,' fol. An abridgment also which Mr. Tindal has made from this work has already been printed more than once.

[2] Val. Flaccus, lib. VI. 55.—Polymetis, Dial. vi. p. 50.

[3] I say "may have," but the chances are ten to one that it is not the case. Juvenal is speaking of the early times of the republic, when its citizens were still unacquainted with splendour and luxury, and the soldier employed the gold and silver of which he had despoiled his foe only for the decoration of his horse-trappings and arms. (Sat. xi. 100-107.)

> "Tunc rudis et Graias mirari nescius artes
> Urbibus eversis prædarum in parte reperta
> Magnorum artificum frangebat pocula miles,
> Ut phaleris gauderet equus, cælataque cassis
> Romulæ simulacra feræ mansuescere jussæ
> Imperii fato, geminos sub rupe Quirinos,
> Ac nudam effigiem clypeo fulgentis et hasta,
> Pendentisque Dei perituro ostenderet hosti."

The soldier broke up costly cups, the masterpieces of great artists, that he might have a she-wolf and a little Romulus and Remus, wherewith to adorn his helmet, made out of the metal. All is intelligible up to the last two lines, where the poet goes on to describe a figure of this kind, wrought upon the helmets of the old soldiers. It is easy to see that this figure is intended for Mars; the question is, what is the meaning of the epithet *pendentis*, which he applies to him. Rigaltius discovered a gloss which explained it by "quasi ad ictum se inclinatis."

Juvenal had such a helmet or shield in his mind when he alluded to it by a word which, up to the time of Addison, had been a riddle to all commentators. I my-

Lubinus is of opinion that the figure was upon the shield, and that, as the shield was suspended from the arm, the poet may on this account have applied the epithet "suspended" to the figure. But this is in opposition to the construction; for the subject to *ostenderet* is not *miles* but *cassis*. Britannicus observes, "everything that stands high in the air may be said to be pendent, and therefore this figure either above or upon the helmet may be so called." Others wish to read *perdentis* instead of *pendentis*, in order to create an antithesis with the following *perituro*, which, however, they alone could admire. Let us see what is Addison's opinion about this disputed point. The commentators, he says, are all in error. "The true meaning of the words is certainly as follows. The Roman soldiers, who were not a little proud of their founder and the military genius of their republic, used to bear on their helmets the first history of Romulus, who was begot by the God of War, and suckled by a wolf. The figure of the god was made as if descending upon the priestess Ilia, or, as others call her, Rhea Silvia. . . . As he was represented descending his figure appeared suspended in the air over the vestal virgin, in which sense the word *pendentis* is extremely proper and poetical. Besides the antique basso-relievo (in Bellori), that made me first think of this interpretation, I have since met with the same figures on the reverses of a couple of ancient coins, which were stamped in the reign of Antoninus Pius" (Addison's Travels, Rome, Tonson's edition, 1745, p. 183). Since Spence thinks this discovery of Addison such an extraordinarily happy one as to quote it as a pattern of its kind, and a very strong example of the use which may be made of the works of the old artists in illustrating the Roman classic poets, I cannot refrain from entering into a somewhat closer examination of this explanation. (Polymetis, Dial. vii. p. 77.) Now firstly, I must observe that it is not probable that the mere sight of the bas-relief and the coins would have recalled the passage in Juvenal to Addison's memory, had he not at the same time recollected that in the old scholiast who reads *venientis* instead of *fulgentis* in the last line but one he had seen the gloss: "Martis ad Iliam venientis ut concumberet." If, however, we reject the reading of the scholiast and adopt the same as Addison himself, there is nothing to lead to the supposition that the poet had Rhea in his mind. Consider if it would not manifestly be a hysteronproteron for him to speak of the wolf and the twins, and afterwards mention for the first time the event to which they were indebted for their existence. Rhea is not yet a mother, and the children are already lying under the rocks. Consider if a love-scene would be altogether a suitable device for the helmet of a Roman soldier. The soldier was proud of the divine origin of his founder; that was sufficiently testified by the she-wolf and the infants; and it by no means follows that he would have wished to exhibit Mars in the conception of an action in which he was anything but the terrible

self seem to feel the passage in Ovid where the wearied Cephalus calls upon the cooling breezes:

"Aura venias
Meque juves, intresque sinus, gratissima, nostros!"

Mars. It is no reason that, because the surprise of Rhea is found represented on ever so many old marbles and coins, it was also adapted for a piece of armour. Besides, where are the marble and the coins on which Addison discovered it, and where saw he Mars in this hovering attitude? The ancient bas-relief to which he appeals ought to be found in Bellori; but we search through the Admiranda, a collection of the finest antique bas-reliefs, for it in vain. I cannot find it, nor can Spence have found it either there or elsewhere, as he makes no allusion to it whatever. All, therefore, depends upon the coin. Let us look at this, then, in Addison's own work. There is a Rhea in a reclining posture, and as the die-cutter had no room to draw the figure of Mars on the same ground with her he has placed him a little higher. This is all. Beyond this there is not the slightest appearance of hovering. It is true that in the engraving which Spence gives of it this hovering attitude is very strongly expressed; the upper part of the body is thrown considerably forwards. It is plain that the figure is not standing; and if it cannot be falling, it must needs be hovering. Spence says that he himself is in possession of this coin. It would be harsh to call a man's integrity into question, even concerning a trifle. But a prejudice once adopted exercises an influence even upon our eyes; besides, he may have permitted his artist to strengthen the expression which he fancied he himself discovered upon the coin, that his reader might feel as little doubt upon the subject as himself. There is no doubt, at any rate, that Spence and Addison both refer to the same coin, and that this being the case the latter has either greatly misrepresented or the former greatly beautified it. I have yet another objection to urge against this assumed hovering attitude of Mars, viz. that a body hovering without any visible cause by which the effect of its gravity is counteracted is an incongruity of which no instance is to be found among the ancient works of art. It is not even permitted in modern painting; but if a body is suspended in the air, it must either have wings, or must appear to rest upon something, though it be only a Cloud. When Homer represents Thetis as ascending from the beach to Olympus on foot—

Τὴν μὲν ἄρ' Οὔλυμπόνδε πόδες φέρον.—*Iliad*, xviii. 148,

Count Caylus displays too just a comprehension of the necessities of art to permit the goddess to step through the air so freely. She is to take her way upon a cloud ('Tableaux tirés de l'Iliade,' p. 91); just as for the same reason he, on another occasion, places her in a chariot (p. 131), though the poet's description expressly contradicts him. How indeed could it be otherwise? Although the poet teaches us to image to ourselves the goddess clothed in the human form, he is far

and his mistress Procris takes this "Aura" to be the name of a rival—I seem, I say, to feel this passage more natural

from entertaining any idea of gross and heavy matter, and animates her human form with a power which exempts her from our laws of motion. But how could painting draw a distinction between the bodily figure of a god and of a man, which would be sufficiently striking to prevent our eyes from being offended at seeing completely different principles of motion, gravity, and equilibrium observed in their treatment? How but by conventional signs; and in reality a pair of wings and a cloud are nothing else. But of this more in another place. For the present it is sufficient to require from the advocates of Addison's opinion that they should show us a figure upon any other monument of antiquity, suspended as freely and absolutely in the air as the Mars on Addison's coin is supposed to be. It is not likely that this Mars was the only specimen of its kind; or that tradition had transmitted any circumstance which rendered this hovering attitude indispensable in this particular instance. Not the slightest trace of such an idea can be found in Ovid (Fast. lib. i.). Nay more, such a circumstance cannot be reconciled with the other extant ancient works of art which represent the same story, and in which Mars is manifestly not hovering but walking. Let us turn to the bas-relief in Montfaucon (Suppl. tom. i. p. 183), the original of which, if I am not mistaken, is at Rome in the Mellini palace. Rhea is lying asleep under a tree, while Mars is approaching her with stealthy footsteps, and his right hand stretched backwards with that significant movement by which we beckon to those behind us either to stand still or to follow quietly. His posture here is precisely the same as upon the coin, except that on the coin the lance is placed in the right hand, but upon the bas-relief in the left. So many celebrated statues and bas-reliefs are found copied upon coins, that it was probably the case here. As for the difference between the two, the die-cutter did not appreciate the expression contained in the backward motion of the hand, and therefore thought it better to fill it with the lance. If all this is taken together, how little probability does Addison's hypothesis still retain; scarcely more indeed than bare possibility. Yet where are we to look for a better explanation, if this is worth nothing? It may be that there is a better among those, which Addison rejected. But if not, what then? The passage of the poet is corrupt; let it remain so. Remain so it will, though twenty new explanations of it should be proposed. Such as the following, for instance: that *pendentis* should be taken in its figurative sense, as equivalent to "uncertain, irresolute, undecided;" *Mars pendens* would in that case convey the same meaning as Mars incertus, or "Mars communis." "Dii communes sunt," says Servius (ad. v. 118, lib. xii. Æneid), "Mars, Bellona, Victoria, quia hi in bello utrique parti favere possunt," and the whole line—

"Pendentisque Dei (effigiem) perituro ostenderet hosti"

—would then mean that the old Roman soldier was wont to bear the image of the god, the protector of his foe as well as of himself, under

when I see upon the works of art of the ancients that they actually personified the gentle breezes, and under the name of "Auræ" worshipped a kind of female sylph.[4] I admit that, when Juvenal compares an empty fellow of rank with a Hermes, we should have great difficulty in finding the similarity in this comparison, unless we had seen such a Hermes, and knew it to be a worthless column, which only bears the head, or at most the trunk, of the god, and which from the absence therefrom of hands and feet calls up the idea of inactivity.[5] Illustra-

the very eyes of his enemy, who was none the less destined to fall by his hand. A very fine idea, attributing the victories of the ancient Romans to their own bravery rather than to the partial assistance of their progenitor. For all that "non liquet."

[4] "Till I got acquainted," says Spence (Polymetis, Dial. xiii. p. 208), "with these auræ (or sylphs), I found myself always at a loss in reading the known story of Cephalus and Procris, in Ovid. I could never imagine how Cephalus's crying out 'Aura venias' (though in ever so languishing a manner) could give anybody a suspicion of his being false to Procris. As I had been always used to think that Aura signified only the air in general, or a gentle breeze in particular, I thought Procris's jealousy less founded than the most extravagant jealousies generally are; but when I had once found that Aura might signify a very handsome young lady as well as the air, the case was entirely altered; and the story seemed to go on in a very reasonable manner." I am not going to recall in my note the approbation which I have bestowed in my text upon this discovery, on which Spence evidently plumes himself. But I cannot omit observing that the passage of the poet would be quite natural and comprehensible without it. All that was required to be known was, that among the ancients Aura was not an unusual name for women. *E.g.*, it is the name of a nymph in Nonnus (Dionys. lib. xlviii.), one of the attendants of Diana, who, because she boasted that her beauty was more manly than that of the goddess, was, as a punishment for her presumption, given up while sleeping to the embraces of Bacchus.

[5] Juvenalis Satyræ, viii. 52–55:—

. "At tu
Nil nisi Cecropides; truncoque simillimus Hermæ:
Nullo quippe alio vincis discrimine, quam quod
Illi marmoreum caput est, tua vivit imago."

If Spence had included the Greek authors in his plan, an old fable of Æsop might perhaps, or perhaps might not, have occurred to him, on which the form of one of these pillars of Hermes throws a light still more beautiful and more indispensable to the proper understanding of its meaning. "Hermes," Æsop tells us, "was desirous to learn in what estimation he was held among men. He concealed his divinity, and

tions of this kind are by no means to be despised, even though they should not be always necessary or always sufficient. The poet had the work of art before his eyes, not as an imitation, but as a thing independently existing, or else artist and poet had adopted the same conceptions, and consequently, in their representations, there must have been exhibited a coincidence, from which, in turn, conclusions as to the universality of those conceptions might be deduced.

But when Tibullus paints the form of Apollo, as he appeared to him in a dream, "the beautiful youth, his

entered a sculptor's; here he saw a figure of Jupiter, and asked the artist its price. 'A drachma,' was the reply. Mercury smiled; 'And this Juno?' he continued. 'About the same!' was the answer. Meantime he had espied an image of himself, and was thus cogitating: 'I am the messenger of the gods; I am the author of all gain; men must needs value me highly; and this god here,' he went on, pointing to the figure of himself, 'what may be its price?' 'Oh, if you will buy the other two, I will throw that into the bargain.'" Mercury's vanity received a check. The sculptor, however, did not know him, and could not therefore have had any design of wounding his self-love; but there must have been something in the nature of the statues which made the last of such little value that the artist was willing to give it in with the others. The lower rank of the god could not have been the reason, for the artist values his productions according to the skill, the industry, and the labour expended upon them, and not according to the rank and estimation in which the beings whom they represent are held. It is clear that an image of Mercury, if it was to cost less than one of Jupiter or Juno, must have required less skill and industry in its execution. Such was really the case: the statues of Jupiter and Juno were full figures of these divinities; the statue of Mercury was a simple square pillar with his bust at the top of it. No wonder, then, the artist could afford to give it in to the purchaser of the other two. Mercury overlooked this circumstance, because his thoughts were wholly employed in the consideration of his seeming pre-eminent merit; his chagrin, therefore, was as natural as deserved. It would be vain to search the commentators, translators, or imitators of Æsop for any traces of this explanation; whilst I could quote a whole series, if it were worth the trouble, who have understood the fable literally, that is, have not understood it at all. They have either not felt the incongruity which arises from all the images being supposed to be of the same kind, or they have all pushed it too far. The price which the artist asks for his Jupiter is perhaps also a difficulty in this fable, for a potter could hardly make a doll for the money. A drachma, therefore, must be taken generally as equivalent to any very low price.—Fab. Æsop, 90.)

temples encircled by the chaste bay, Syrian odours exhaling from the golden locks, which float about his slender neck; the gleaming white and rosy redness mingled over the whole body, as upon the tender cheeks of a bride first being led to her beloved"—there is no reason why these traits should have been borrowed from celebrated old paintings. The "nova nupta verecundia notabilis" of Echion may have been in Rome, may have been copied a thousand and a thousand times; but does that prove that bridal modesty itself had vanished from the world? Because the painter had seen it, was no poet ever to see it more, save in the painter's imitation?[6] Or when another poet describes Vulcan as wearied, and his face, scorched by the furnace, as red and burning, must he have first learnt, from the work of a painter, that toil wearies and heat reddens?[7] Or when Lucretius describes the changes of the seasons, and in natural succession conducts them past us, with the whole train of their effects in earth and air, are we to suppose that he was an ephemeral, who had never lived through a whole year, had never experienced these changes in his own person? Are we to assume his picture to have been drawn after an ancient procession, in which the statues of the seasons were carried about? Did he, necessarily, first learn from these statues the old poetic artifice by which such abstractions are converted into realities?[8] Does not the "Pon-

[6] Tibullus, Eleg. IV. lib. iii.; Polymetis, Dial. viii. p. 84.
[7] Statius, lib. i.; Sylv. lib. v. 8; Polymetis, Dial. viii. p. 81.
[8] Lucretius, d. R. N. lib. v. 736-747:—

"It Ver et Venus, et Veneris prænuntius ante
Pinnatus graditur Zephyrus, vestigia propter
Flora quibus mater præspargens ante viai
Cuncta coloribus egregiis et odoribus opplet.
Inde loci sequitur Calor aridus, et comes una
Pulverulenta Ceres, et Etesia flabra Aquilonum.
Inde Autumnus adit: graditur simul Evius Evan:
Inde aliæ tempestates, ventique sequuntur,
Altitonans Volturnus et Auster fulmine pollens.
Tandem Bruma nives adfert, pigrumque rigorem
Reddit, Hyems sequitur, crepitans ac dentibus Algus."

Spence pronounces this to be one of the most beautiful passages in the whole poem of Lucretius. At least it is one of those on which his reputation as a poet is grounded. Yet surely he greatly diminishes this honour,

tem indignatus Araxes" of Virgil, that excellent and poetical picture of a flooded river, as it tears away the bridge which had spanned it, lose its whole beauty when the poet is said to be alluding by it to a work of art, in which this river god is represented in the act of breaking a bridge in pieces?[9] What profit can we derive from such illustrations as these, that deprive the poet of any share of honour in the clearest passages, in order to admit but the glimmer of some artist's idea?

I regret that so useful a book as the 'Polymetis' might otherwise have been should, through this tasteless caprice for attributing to the ancient poets, in place of their own genius, familiarity with some other man's, have become repulsive, and far more prejudicial to the classic authors than the watery commentaries of insipid etymologists could ever have been. Still more do I regret that in this Spence should have been preceded even by Addison, who, in the laudable desire of elevating an acquaintance with works of art to a means of interpretation, has no less failed to distinguish where the imitation of the artist is becoming, and where derogatory, to the poet.[10]

or rather deprives him of it altogether, when he says that the description was borrowed from some ancient procession of the deities of the seasons; and why? "Such processions," says the Englishman, "of their deities in general were as common among the Romans of old, as those in the honour of the saints are in certain countries to this day. All the expressions used by Lucretius here come in very aptly, if applied to a procession." Excellent reasons! But how much might be said against the last! The epithets which the poet bestows upon the personified abstractions, "Calor aridus—Ceres pulverulenta—Volturnus altitonans—fulmine pollens Auster—Algus dentibus crepitans," prove at once that they derive their being from him, and not from the artist, who must needs have attributed totally different characteristics to them. Spence appears, moreover, to have hit upon this idea of a procession through Abraham Preigern, who in his note upon these lines says, "Ordo est quasi pompæ cujusdam, Ver et Venus, Zephyrus et Flora," &c. But Spence should have been satisfied to stop here. To say "The poet makes the seasons pass by as it were in a procession" is all very well, but to say he borrowed the idea of making them thus pass before us from a procession shows great want of taste.

[9] Æneid, lib. viii. 728; Polymetis, Dial. xiv. p. 230.

[10] In various passages of his travels; and in his conversation on ancient coins.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the similarity which exists between poetry and painting, Spence forms the most curious conceptions possible. He believes that the two arts were, among the ancients, so closely united that they constantly went hand in hand; the poet never suffering himself to lose sight of the painter, nor the painter of the poet. That poetry is the more comprehensive art, that beauties wait on its bidding, which painting would in vain attempt to attain; that it often has good reasons for preferring inartistic beauties to artistic,—of all this he seems never once to have thought; and therefore the most trifling differences that he may observe between the ancient poets and artists involve him in an embarrassment, by which he is driven to the use of the most strange expedients.

The ancient poets, for the most part, attributed horns to Bacchus. "Therefore it is surprising," says Spence, "that these horns are not more commonly seen upon his statues."[1] He advances first one reason, then another, now the ignorance of antiquarians, now the smallness of the horns themselves, which he thinks might have been hidden under the grape-clusters and ivy-leaves which were the constant headdress of the god. He hovers around the true cause, without for a moment suspecting it. The horns of Bacchus were not natural horns, as were those of fauns and satyrs. They were an ornament of the brow, which he could put on, or lay aside, at his pleasure.

> "Tibi cum sine cornibus adstas
> Virgineum caput est,"

is Ovid's festive invocation of Bacchus;[2] so that he could show himself without horns, and did so whenever he wished to appear in his girlish beauty, in which the artist would naturally represent him, and would therefore be compelled to avoid every addition which might produce a bad effect. Such an addition would these horns have been, which were fastened on the chaplet just as they are seen to be on a head in the Royal Cabinet of

[1] Polymetis, Dial. ix. p. 129. [2] Metamorph lib. iv. 19

Berlin.[3] Such an addition was the chaplet itself, which concealed his beautiful forehead, and therefore occurs in the statues of Bacchus as rarely as the horns themselves; while the poets are as continually attributing it to him as its inventor. The horns and the chaplet furnished the poet with neat allusions to the actions and character of the god. To the artist, on the contrary, they were impediments, preventing the display of higher beauties; and if Bacchus, as I believe, obtained the name of "Biformis, Δίμορφος," for this very reason, viz. that he could manifest himself in beauty as well as in frightfulness, it is perfectly natural that the artists, from his two forms, should have selected that which best corresponded with the purpose of their art.

In Roman poetry, Minerva and Juno often hurl the thunderbolt. Why, asks Spence, do they not do it in their statues also?[4] He answers, "This power was the special privilege of these two goddesses, the reason of which was, perhaps, first learned in the Samothracian mysteries. But since among the ancient Romans the artists were considered as common people, and would therefore be rarely initiated into them, they would doubtless know nothing of it, and what they knew not of they clearly could not represent." There are several questions which I might ask Spence in turn. Did these common persons work on their own account; or at the bidding of patrons of higher rank, who might be instructed in these mysteries? Did artists occupy such an inferior position in Greece also? Were not the Roman artists for the most part born Greeks? and so forth.

Statius and Valerius Flaccus describe an irritated Venus, and that too in such terrible traits that at this moment she might be taken for a fury rather than the goddess of love. Spence looks around among the ancient works of art for such a Venus, but in vain. What is the conclusion he draws? Is it that the poet has greater liberty allowed him than the sculptor and painter? This is the conclusion he should have drawn, but he had once for all adopted, as fundamental, the principle that "scarce anything can be

[3] Begeri Thes. Brandenb. vol. iii. p. 242.
[4] Polymetis, Dial. vi. p. 63.

good in a poetical description which would appear absurd if represented in a statue or picture."[5] Consequently the poets must have committed an error. "Statius and Valerius belong to an age when Roman poetry was already in its decline. In this very passage they display their bad judgment and corrupted taste. Among the poets of a better age such a repudiation of the laws of artistic expression will never be found."[6]

To pronounce such criticisms as these needs but small powers of discernment. I will not, however, in this instance, take up the defence either of Statius or Valerius, but confine myself for the present to a general observation. The gods and spiritual beings, as they are represented by the artists, are not precisely such as to fulfil the requisitions of the poet. With the artist they are personified abstractions, which, in order to be at once recognized, must perpetually retain their appropriate characteristics. With the poet, on the contrary, they are real, acting beings, who, in addition to their general characters, possess other qualities and feelings, which may become the more prominent according to the circumstances in which they are placed. In the eyes of the sculptor Venus is only "Love." He must, therefore, attribute to her all the modest, bashful beauty, all the graceful charm, which are the attractions in a beloved object; and which, therefore, we include in our abstract idea of love. If there is the least deviation from this ideal, we can no longer recognize her form. Beauty, but clothed with majesty rather than bashfulness, becomes at once, not a Venus, but a Juno. Charms, but charms commanding, and rather manly than graceful, give us, instead of a Venus, a Minerva. An irritated Venus, a Venus impelled by revenge and fury, is a positive contradiction to the sculptor; for love, as such, is never angry or revengeful. To the poet, on the contrary, Venus is indeed "love," but she is also the goddess of love who, in addition to this character, has her peculiar personality, and consequently must be just as capable of the impulses of aversion as she is of those of affection. What wonder, then, if he paints her as

[5] Polymetis, Dial. xx. p. 311. [6] *Ibid.* Dial. vii. p. 74.

inflamed with indignation and fury, especially when it is injured love itself that has kindled these feelings in her?

It is quite true that in groups the artist as well as the poet can introduce Venus, or any other divinity, as apart from her peculiar character, a real and acting being. But in that case their actions must, at least, not contradict their character, even though not the immediate consequences of it. Venus bestows upon her son divine armour. This action the artist can represent as well as the poet. Here there is nothing to prevent him from giving Venus all the charm and beauty which are her attributes as the goddess of love; nay rather, in his work, she will be by these very attributes the more easily recognized. But when Venus wishes to take vengeance upon her contemners, the men of Lemnos, and with wild dilated form, with flushed cheeks, dishevelled hair, and torch in hand, she wraps a sable robe around her, and stormily descends upon a gloomy cloud, this is no moment for the artist, since at this moment there is no feature by which he could render her capable of being recognized. It is only a moment for the poet, because he has the privilege of combining with it another, in which the goddess is wholly Venus, so nearly and so closely, that she is never lost sight of in the fury. This Flaccus does:—

"Neque enim alma videri
Jam tumet; aut tersi crinem subnectitur auro,
Sidereos diffusa sinus. Eadem effera et ingens
Et maculis suffecta genas: pinumque sonantem
Virginibus Stygiis, nigramque simillima pallam"[7]

Statius does the same:—

"Illa Paphon veterem centumque altaria linquens.
Nec vultu nec crine prior, solvisse jugalem
Ceston, et Idalias procul ablegasse volucres
Fertur. Erant certe, media qui noctis in umbra
Divam alios ignes majoraque tela gerentem,
Tartarias inter thalamis volitasse sorores
Vulgarent: utque implicitis arcana domorum
Anguibus, et sæva formidine cuncta replerit
Limina."[8]

[7] Argonaut. lib. ii. 102. [8] Thebaid. lib. v. 61.

But it may be said the poet alone possesses the power of painting with negative traits, and, by mixing the negative and positive together, of uniting two appearances in one. No longer is she the graceful Venus; no longer are her locks bound with golden clasps; no azure robe is floating round her; her girdle is laid aside; she is armed with other torches and larger arrows than her own; furies, like herself, bear her company. But there is no reason, because the artist is compelled to abstain from the exercise of this power, that the poet should do the same. If painting must needs be the sister of poetry, let her not be a jealous sister; and let not the younger forbid the elder every ornament that does not sit well upon herself.

CHAPTER IX.

If we wish to compare the painter and poet together in single instances, we must first inquire whether they both enjoyed entire freedom; whether, uninfluenced by any external pressure, they could labour at producing the highest effect of their respective arts.

Such an external influence was often exercised by religion over the ancient artist. His work, destined for worship and devotion, could not always be as perfect as if the pleasure of the beholders had been his sole aim. The gods were overburdened with allegorical emblems by superstition, and the most beautiful of them were not everywhere worshipped as such.

Bacchus, in his temple of Lemnos, out of which the pious Hypsipyle, in the form of the god,[1] rescued her

[1] Valerius Flaccus, lib. ii. Argonaut. 265–273:—

"Serta patri, juvenisque comam vestesque Lyæi
Induit, et medium curru locat: æraque circum
Tympanaque et plenas tacita formidine cistas.
Ipsa sinus hederisque ligat famularibus artus:
Pampineamque quatit ventosis ictibus hastam,
Respiciens: teneat virides velatus habenas
Ut pater, et nivea tumeant ut cornua mitra,
Et sacer ut Bacchum referat scyphus."

The word *tumeant*, in the last line but one, seems to indicate that the horns of Bacchus were not quite so small as Spence imagines.

father, was represented with horns, and so, without doubt, he appeared in all his temples; for these horns were symbolic, and one of the indications of his being. But the unfettered artist, who executed his Bacchus for no temple, omitted this emblem; and if we, among the extant statues of this god, find none in which he is represented with horns,[2] it is perhaps a proof that none of the consecrated images under which he was actually worshipped are remaining. Besides, it is exceedingly probable that upon these latter, principally, fell the fury of the pious iconoclasts of the first centuries of Christianity; by whom only here and there a work of art, if polluted by no adoration, was sometimes spared.

As, however, among the excavated antiques, pieces of both kinds are to be found, it were to be wished that the title of works of art was confined to those alone in which the artist had the power of really showing himself to be such, in which beauty was his primary and ultimate object. None of the others, in which too evident traces testify to religious conformity, deserve this name, because in their case art did not labour on its own account, but was a mere helpmate to religion, which, in the material subjects that it afforded for representation, looked rather to significance than to beauty. Yet for all that I do not mean to maintain that it has not frequently embodied all that was significant in the beautiful, or at least, out of indulgence to the art and the fine taste of the age,

[2] The so-called Bacchus in the gardens of the Medici at Rome (Montfaucon, Suppl. aux Antiq. t. i. p. 254) has little horns, just sprouting from his forehead. But there are some connoisseurs who, for that very reason, think it would be more properly considered a faun. In fact such natural horns are a degradation of the human form, and can only become beings who are esteemed a kind of link between man and brute. Besides the attitude, the longing look with which he eyes the grapes held over him is more suited to one of his attendants than to the god himself. I here recollect what Clemens Alexandrinus says of Alexander the Great (Protrept. p. 48, Edit. Pott.): Ἐβούλετο δὲ καὶ Ἀλέξανδρος Ἄμμωνος υἱὸς εἶναι δοκεῖν, καὶ κεράσφορος ἀναπλάττεσθαι πρὸς τῶν ἀγαλματοποιῶν, τὸ καλὸν ἀνθρώπου ὕβρισαι σπεύδων κέρατι. It was Alexander's express wish that the sculptor should represent him with horns; he was quite content that the human beauty of his form should be degraded by them, provided he should be believed to have sprung from a divine origin.

dispensed with so much of the former that the latter seemed to prevail alone.

If no such distinction is drawn, the connoisseur and antiquary will be constantly coming into collision, because they do not understand one another. If the former, from his insight into the intention of art, maintains that the ancient artist could not have produced this or that work, *i.e.* not as an artist, not spontaneously; the latter stretches this into an assertion that neither religion nor any other external cause, lying outside the region of art, could have caused its execution by the artist, *i.e.* by the artist as a craftsman. Thus he believes he can refute the connoisseur with the first statue that comes to hand, which the latter, without the least scruple, though to the great scandal of the learned world, condemns again to the heap of rubbish from which it was extracted.[3]

[3] When I asserted above that the ancient artists had never executed a fury [see p. 15, and note], it had not escaped me that the furies had more than one temple, in which there certainly must have been statues. In that at Kerynea, Pausanias found some of wood, which were neither large nor in any other respect worthy of remark; but it seemed that art, forbidden to exhibit its powers in the statues of the goddesses, displayed them in those of their priestesses; which stood in the vestibule of the temple, and were most beautifully executed in stone (Pausanias Achaic. xxv. p. 587, edit. Kühn). Neither had I forgotten that it is supposed that their heads may be seen upon an abraxas made known by Chiffletius, and upon a lamp in Licetus (Dissertat. sur les Furies par Bannier, Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions, t. v. p. 48). Nor was that urn of Etruscan workmanship in Gori (Mus. Etrusc. tab. 151) unknown to me, upon which Orestes and Pylades are drawn attacked by furies with torches. I spoke, however, of works of art only, from which I believe that all these pieces may be excluded; and even if the last-mentioned work were not to be excluded with the rest, yet when considered from another point of view it serves to corroborate my opinion rather than contradict it. For though beauty was not, generally speaking, the aim of Etruscan artists, yet even here the furies are not denoted by their horrible features so much as by their demeanour and attributes. Indeed so mild is their expression, while they thrust their torches into the very eyes of Pylades and Orestes, that they appear as if they only wished to frighten them in jest. We can only infer how terrible they appeared to the two friends from their terror, but in no way from the figures of the furies themselves. They are therefore furies, and yet not. They perform the office of furies, yet not with that representa-

On the other hand, too much importance may be attributed to the influence exercised by religion upon art. Spence affords us a curious example of this. He found in Ovid that Vesta was not worshipped in her temple under any personal image; and this seemed to him a sufficient ground for concluding that, as a universal rule, there were no statues of this goddess, and that all which had hitherto been considered such represent not Vesta but a vestal.[4] A strange conclusion! Did the artist lose his right to personify a being to whom the poets give a definite personality; whom they represent as the daughter of Saturn and Ops; whom they depict as being in danger of falling under the brutality of Priapus, and all the rest that they tell of her;—did the artist, I say, lose his right to personify, in his own manner, this being, because, in a single temple, she was only worshipped under the symbol of fire? For Spence here further commits the error of extending what Ovid states only of one particular temple

tion of anger and rage which we are accustomed to associate with the name; not with a brow which, as Catullus says, "expirantis præportat pectoris iras." But lately Herr Winckelmann thought he had discovered a fury, with dishevelled dress and hair, and a dagger in her hand, upon a cornelian in the cabinet of Herr Stosch (Bibl. d. Sch. Wiss. vol. v. p. 30). Hagedorn advises artists, on the strength of this, to introduce furies into their pictures (Betrachtungen über die Malerei, p. 222). Winckelmann himself, however, has since thrown doubts upon this discovery, because he cannot find any grounds for believing that among the ancients the furies were ever armed with daggers instead of torches (Descrip. des Pierres gravées, p. 84). Doubtlessly, therefore, he does not consider the figures upon the coins of the towns Lyrba and Massaura, which Spanheim pronounced Furies, as such (Les Césars de Julien, p. 44), but as a Hecate triformis; for otherwise a fury might here also be seen bearing a dagger in either hand; and it is curious that this too appears with her hair uncovered and dishevelled, whereas in other cases furies are covered with a veil. But supposing Herr Winckelmann's first conjecture to be right, still the case would be the same with the engraved stone and the Etruscan urn; no features can be recognized on account of the minuteness of the work. Besides, engraved stones generally, on account of their use as seals, may be considered as belonging to symbolical language; and the figures upon them may be more frequently arbitrary emblems of their owners than spontaneous productions of the artist.

[4] Polymetis, Dial. vii. p. 81.

of Vesta, viz. the one at Rome,[5] to all her temples without distinction, and to her worship universally. It does not necessarily follow that she was worshipped everywhere as she was in this temple at Rome; nay, before Numa built it she was not thus worshipped, even in Italy. Numa did not wish to have any divinity represented by either the human or the brutish form; and the improvement which he effected in the worship of Vesta, without doubt consisted in the rejection of all personal representation of her. Ovid himself informs us that, before the time of Numa, there were statues of Vesta in her temple, which from shame, when their priestess Sylvia became a mother, covered their eyes with maiden hands.[6] That even in the temples which the goddess possessed outside the city, in the Roman provinces, her worship was not precisely that established by Numa appears to be proved

[5] Fasti, lib. vi. v. 295–98:—

"Esse diu stultus Vestæ simulacra putavi:
Mox didici curvo nulla subesse dolo.
Ignis inextinctus templo cælatur in illo;
Effigiem nullam Vesta, nec ignis, habet."

Ovid is speaking only of the worship of Vesta at Rome, and of the temple which Numa had there built her, of which he says shortly before (v. 259):—

"Regis opus placidi, quo non metuentius ullum
Numinis ingenium terra Sabina tulit."

[6] Fasti, lib. iii. v. 45, 46:—

"Sylvia fit mater; Vestæ simulacra feruntur
Virgineas oculis opposuisse manus."

It is thus that Spence should have compared Ovid's different statements. The poet speaks of different periods: in the latter passage, of the age preceding Numa; in the former, of a time subsequent to him. During the former she was worshipped in Italy under personal representations as she had been in Troy, from whence Æneas had introduced her.

". . . Manibus vittas, Vestamque potentem,
Æternumque adytis effert penetralibus ignem,"

says Virgil of the spirit of Hector, after it has counselled Æneas to take flight. Here a distinction is expressly drawn between the eternal fire and Vesta or her statue. Spence cannot have studied the Latin poets with sufficient attention for his purpose, since this passage has escaped him.

by several old inscriptions, in which mention is made of a Pontifex Vestæ.[7] At Corinth, too, there was a temple of Vesta, without any image at all, but with a simple altar, upon which sacrifices were offered to her.[8] But does this show that the Greeks had no statues of Vesta? At Athens there was one in the Prytaneion near the statue of Peace.[9] The people of Iasos boasted that they possessed one upon which, although it stood in the open air, neither snow nor rain ever fell.[10] Pliny mentions one, in a sitting posture, from the hand of Skopas, which in his time might be seen in the Servilian garden at Rome.[11] And, allowing that it is not easy for us to distinguish a mere Vestal from a Vesta itself, does this prove that the ancients could not, still less would not, draw this distinction? Certain emblems of art are manifestly more in favour of the one than of the other. The sceptre, the torch, the palladium can only be presumed to be in the hand of a goddess. The cymbal which Codinus attributes to her might perhaps belong to her only as the *Earth;* or Codinus may not have really known what it was he saw.[12]

[7] Lipsius de Vesta et Vestalibus, cap. 13,

[8] Pausanias, Corinth, lib. ii. cap. 35, sect. 1.

[9] Pausanias, Attic. lib. i. cap. 18, sect. 3.

[10] Polyb. Hist. lib. xvi. 11, Oper. vol. ii. p. 443, edit. Ernesti.

[11] Plinius, xxxvi. 4, 7, edit. Tauch.: "Scopas fecit Vestam sedentem laudatam in Servilianis hortis." Lipsius must have had this passage in his mind when he wrote (De Vesta, cap. 3): "Plinius Vestam sedentem effingi solitam ostendit, a stabilitate"; but he had no right to assume that what Pliny said of a particular piece of Skopas was a characteristic universally adopted in the goddess's statues. He himself remarks that on the coins Vesta appears standing as often as sitting; by this observation, however, he corrects, not Pliny, but his own mistaken imagination.

[12] Georg. Codinus de originib. Constant., edit. Venet. p. 12: *Τὴν γῆν λέγουσιν Ἑστίαν, καὶ πλάττουσιν αὐτὴν γυναῖκα, τύμπανον βαστάζουσαν, ἐπειδὴ τοὺς ἀνέμους ἡ γῆ ὑφ' ἑαυτὴν συγκλείει.* Suidas, either on Codinus' authority, or perhaps drawing from a common source with him, says the same in his account of the word *ἑστία.* "The earth is represented under the name of Vesta as a woman carrying a tympanum, in which she is supposed to hold the winds confined." The reason given is somewhat absurd; it would have been more plausible to have said that the tympanum was one of her attributes, because the ancients believed that she resembled it in shape, *σχῆμα αὐτῆς τυμπανοειδὲς εἶναι.* (Plutarchus de placitis Philos. cap. 10, id. de facie in orbe Lunæ.) Only it is possible enough that Codinus may have been mistaken in the figure.

CHAPTER X.

I go on to notice an expression of surprise in Spence, which most significantly proves how little reflexion he can have bestowed upon the nature of the limits of Art and Painting.

"As to the muses in general," he says, "it is remarkable that the poets say so little of them in a descriptive way; much less indeed than might be expected for deities to whom they are so particularly indebted."[1]

What does this mean, if not that he feels surprised that, when the poet speaks of the deities, he does not do it in the dumb speech of the painter? Urania, with the poets, is the muse of astronomy; from her name and her performances we at once recognize her office. The artist, in order to render it palpable, represents her pointing with a wand to a globe of the heavens. This wand, this celestial globe, and this posture are, as it were, his letters, from which he leaves us to spell out the name Urania. But when the poet wishes to say that "Urania had long ago foreseen his death in the aspect of the stars"—

> "Ipsa diu positis lethum prædixerat astris
> Uranie"[2]

—why should he, out of respect to the painter, subjoin, "Urania, wand in hand, and heavenly globe before her"? Would it not be as though a man who could and might speak clearly should still make use of those signs which

or in the name, or in both. Perhaps he knew no better name to give to what he saw in Vesta's hand than "tympanum," or heard it called a tympanum, and it never struck him that a tympanum could be anything else than the instrument which we call a kettle-drum. Tympana, however, were also a kind of wheel:—

"Hinc radios trivere rotis, hinc tympana plaustris Agricolæ—"

(Virgilius, Georgic. ii. 444). The symbol which we see in the hands of the Vesta of Fabretti (ad Tabulam Iliadis, p. 334) seems to me to be very like such a wheel, though this scholar takes it for a handmill.

[1] Polymetis, Dial. viii. p. 91. [2] Statius, Theb. viii. 551.

the mutes in the seraglios of the Turks, from an inability to articulate, have adopted among themselves ?

Spence again expresses the same surprise at the moral beings, or those divinities, to whom the ancients allotted the superintendence of virtues, or whom they supposed to preside over the conduct and events of human life.[3] "It is observable," he says, "that the Roman poets say less of the best of these moral beings than might be expected. The artists are much fuller on this head; and one who would settle what appearances each of them made should go to the medals of the Roman emperors.[4] The poets, in fact, speak of them very often as persons; but of their attributes, their dress, and the rest of their figure they generally say but little."

When the poet personifies abstractions, they are sufficiently characterized by their names and the actions which he represents them as performing.

The artist does not command these means. He is therefore compelled to add to his personified abstractions some emblems by which they may be easily recognised. These emblems, since they are different and have different significations, constitute them allegorical figures.

A female form, with a bridle in her hand; another, leaning against a pillar, are, in art, allegorical beings. On the contrary, with the poets, Temperance and Constancy are not allegorical beings, but personified abstractions.

The invention of these emblems was forced upon artists by necessity. For thus only can they make it understood what this or that figure is intended to signify. But why should the poet allow that to be forced upon him to which the artists have only been driven by a necessity, in which he himself has no share?

What causes Spence so much surprise deserves to be prescribed, as a general law, to poets. They must not convert the necessities of painting into a part of their own wealth. They must not look upon the instruments which art has invented for the sake of following poetry as perfections of which they have any cause to be envious. When an artist clothes an image with symbols, he exalts

[3] Polymetis, Dial. x. p. 137. [4] *Ibid.* p. 134.

a mere statue to a higher being. But if the poet makes use of these artistic decorations, he degrades a higher being into a puppet.

As this rule is confirmed by the practice of the ancients, so is its intentional violation the favourite fault of modern poets. All their imaginary beings appear masqued, and the artists who are most familiar with the details of this masquerade generally understand least of the principal work, viz. how to make their beings act, and act in such a way as to indicate their characters.

Still, among the attributes with which the artists characterize their abstractions, there is a class which is more capable and more deserving of being adopted by the poets. I mean those which possess nothing properly allegorical, but are to be considered less as emblems than as instruments, of which the beings to whom they are attributed, should they be called upon to act as real persons, would or could make use. The bridle in the hand of Temperance, the pillar against which Constancy is leaning, are entirely allegorical, and therefore of no use whatever to the poet. The scales in the hand of Justice are somewhat less so because the right use of the scales is really a part of justice. But the lyre or flute in the hand of a Muse, the lance in the hand of Mars, the hammer and tongs in the hands of Vulcan, are in reality not symbols, but simply instruments, without which these beings could not produce the results which we ascribe to them. Of this class are those attributes which the ancient poets sometimes introduce in their descriptions, and which, on that account, I might, in contradistinction to the allegorical, term the poetical. The latter signify the thing itself, the former only something similar to it.[5]

[5] In the picture which Horace draws of Necessity, and which is perhaps the richest in attributes that can be found among the poets (Od. i. 35)—

> "Te semper anteit sæva Necessitas;
> Clavos trabales et cuneos manu
> Gestans ahenea; nec severus
> Uncus abest liquidumque plumbum,"

whether we take the nails, the clamps, the molten lead, for means of firmly securing or for instruments of punishment, they must

CHAPTER XI.

COUNT CAYLUS also appears to desire that the poet should clothe his imaginary beings with allegorical

alike be considered as belonging to the class of poetical rather than allegorical attributes; yet there are too many of them even when considered as such; and the passage is one of the coldest in Horace, Sanadon says: "J'ose dire que ce tableau, pris dans le détail, serait plus beau sur la toile que dans une ode héroïque. Je ne puis souffrir cet attirail patibulaire de clous, de coins, de croes et de plomb fondu. J'ai cru en devoir décharger la traduction en substituant les idées générales aux idées singulières. C'est dommage que le Poëte ait eu besoin de ce correctif." Sanadon's feeling was just and refined, but his justification of it is based upon false grounds. The passage is unpleasing, not because the attributes made use of are an "attirail patibulaire" (for he had the option of adopting the other interpretation, and thus changing the instruments of execution into the firmest cements employed in building), but because they are peculiarly addressed to the eyes; and, if we attempt to acquire by the ear conceptions which would be naturally conveyed through the eyes, a greater effort is required, while the ideas themselves are incapable of the same distinctness. The continuation of the above-quoted stanza in Horace, moreover, reminds me of a few mistakes of Spence, which do not create the most favourable impression of the accuracy with which he has weighed the passages he has cited from the ancient poets. He is speaking of the figure under which the Romans worshipped Faith or Honesty (Dial. x. p. 145). "The Romans called her 'Fides'; and when they called her 'Sola Fides,' seem to mean the same as we do by the words 'downright honesty.' She is represented with an erect, open air, and with nothing but a thin robe on, so fine that one might see through it. Horace therefore calls her thin-dressed in one of his odes; and transparent in another." In this short passage there are not less than three gross mistakes. Firstly, it is false that *sola* was a peculiar epithet applied by the Romans to the goddess Fides. In both the passages of Livy, which he quotes to prove this (lib. i. § 21, lib. ii. § 3), it signifies nothing more than it always signifies, viz. "the exclusion of everything else." In the first passage the *soli* even appears suspicious to the critics, and is supposed to have crept into the text through a fault of transcription occasioned by the *solenne*, which stands next it. In the second quotation Livy is speaking, not of Fides, but of Innocentia. Secondly, it is stated that in one of his odes (viz. the one above mentioned, lib. i. 35) Horace has bestowed upon Fides the epithet "thin-dressed":—

> "Te Spes, et albo rara Fides colit
> Velato panno."

symbols.[1] The Count understood painting far better than he did poetry.

It is true that *rarus* does also means thin; but here it simply signifies "rare," *i.e.* "what is seldom met with," and is applied to Fides herself, and not to her dress. Spence would have been right, had the poet said, "Fides raro velata panno." Thirdly, Horace is said in another passage to call Faith or Integrity "transparent," and to mean the same as when we say (in our professions of fidelity and honesty) "I wish you could see into my breast," or "I wish that you could see through me." This passage is the following line of the eighteenth ode of the first book :—

"Arcanique Fides prodiga, pellucidior vitro."

How could any one so suffer himself to be misled by a mere word? Is the *Fides arcani prodiga*, Faithfulness, or is it not rather Faithlessness? It is of this last that Horace speaks as being "as transparent as glass," because she exposes to every gaze the secrets that have been entrusted to her.

[1] Apollo delivers the body of Sarpedon purified and embalmed to Death and Sleep, to carry to his fatherland (Il. xvi. 681) :—

Πέμπε δέ μιν πομποῖσιν ἅμα κραιπνοῖσι φέρεσθαι,
Ὕπνῳ καὶ Θανάτῳ διδυμάοσιν.

Caylus recommends this idea to the painter, but adds: "Il est fâcheux qu'Homère ne nous ait rien laissé sur les attributs qu'on donnait de son temps au Sommeil; nous ne connaissons, pour caractériser ce Dieu, que son action même, et nous le couronnons de pavots. Ces idées sont modernes; la première est d'un médiocre service, mais elle ne peut être employée dans le cas présent, où même les fleurs me paroissent déplacées, surtout pour une figure qui groupe avec la mort" (Tableaux tirés de l'Iliade, de l'Odyssée d'Homère et de l'Enéide de Virgile, avec des observations générales sur le Costume; à Paris, 1757–58). This is requiring of Homer one of those trifling ornaments which are most strongly opposed to the grandeur of his style. The most ingenious attributes he could have bestowed on Sleep would not have characterized him nearly so perfectly, would not have called up in us nearly so lively an idea of him, as does the single trait by which he represents him as the twin brother of Death. Let the artist but express this and he may dispense with all attributes. The ancient artists have, in fact, represented Death and Sleep with that resemblance between the two which is naturally expected in twins. On a chest of cedar wood in the temple of Juno at Elis they were carved as two boys, sleeping in the arms of Night. Only the one was white, while the other was black; the one slept, the other appeared to sleep; both had their feet crossed; for I prefer to translate the words of Pausanias (Eliac. cap. xviii.), ἀμφοτέρους διεστραμμένους τοὺς πόδας, by this rather than by "with crooked feet," or, as Gedoyn has rendered it in his language, "les pieds contrefaits." What expression would crooked feet have here? But to lie with the feet crossed is the

Yet, in the work in which he expresses this desire, I have found occasion for some weightier reflexions, the most important of which I now notice, in order to afford it a maturer consideration.

The artist, according to the Count's view, should make himself more closely acquainted with the greatest of descriptive poets, Homer—that second nature. He shows him what rich and hitherto unemployed materials for the most excellent pictures the story written by the Greek affords, and that the more closely he adheres even to the most trifling circumstances mentioned by the poet the more likely he is to succeed in the execution of his work.

In this proposition, the two kinds of imitation which I distinguished above are again confounded. The painter shall not only represent what the poet has represented, but the details of his representation shall be the same. He shall make use of the poet, not only as a relater, but as a poet.

But why is not this second kind of imitation, which is so degrading to a poet, equally so to an artist? If a series of such pictures as Count Caylus has adduced from Homer had existed in the poet's time, and we knew that he had derived his work from them, would he not be immeasurably lowered in our admiration? How then does it happen

ordinary posture of sleepers, and is exactly the attitude of Sleep in Maffei (Raccol. pl. 151). Modern artists have entirely abandoned the resemblance which the ancients maintained between Sleep and Death; and it has become their general custom to represent Death as a skeleton, or at the most as a skeleton clothed with skin. Caylus's first duty was to advise the artist whether to follow the ancient or modern custom in his representation of Death. Yet he appears to declare himself in favour of the modern, since he speaks of Death as a figure, near which another crowned with flowers could not well be grouped. But had he considered how unsuited the modern idea of Death would have been to an Homeric picture? And is it possible that its repulsiveness should not have forced itself upon him? I cannot persuade myself that the little metal figure in the ducal gallery at Florence which represents a skeleton lying on the ground, and resting one of its arms on an urn (Spence's Polymetis, tab. xli.), is a real antique. At any rate it cannot represent Death, because the ancients represented him differently. Even their poets have never drawn him under this repulsive form. [Lessing subsequently wrote an essay on this subject, which will be found in this volume, p. 175.—Ed.]

that we withdraw none of our high esteem from the artist, when he really does nothing more than express the words of the poet in form and colour?

The following seems to be the cause. In the artist's case the execution appears to be more difficult than the invention; in the poet's this is reversed, and execution seems easier to him than invention. If Virgil had borrowed the connexion of Laokoon and his children by the serpent-folds from the group of statuary, the merit which we now esteem the greater and more difficult of attainment in this picture of his would at once fall to the ground, and only the more trifling one be left. For the first creation of this connexion in the imagination is far greater than the expression of it in words. On the contrary, had the artist borrowed this connexion from the poet, he would still have always retained sufficient merit in our eyes, although he would have been entirely deprived of the credit of the invention. For expression in marble is far more difficult than expression in words; and, when we weigh invention and representation against one another, we are always inclined to yield to the master on one side, just as much as we think we have received in excess on the other.

There are even cases where it is a greater merit for artists to have imitated nature through the medium of the imitation of the poet, than without it. The painter who executes a beautiful landscape after the description of a Thomson has done more than he who takes it directly from nature. This latter sees his original before him, while the former must exert his imagination until he believes he has it before him. The latter produces something beautiful from a lively and sensible impression; the former from the indefinite and weak representation of arbitrary signs.

But, as a consequence of this natural readiness in us to dispense with the merit of invention in the artist, there arose on his part an equally natural indifference to it. For, when we saw that invention could not be his strong point, but that his highest merit depended on execution, it became of no importance to him whether his original matter were old or new, used once or a thousand times;

whether it belonged to himself or another. He confined himself, therefore, within the narrow circle of a few subjects, already become familiar to himself and the public, and expended his whole inventive power upon variations of materials already known, upon fresh combinations of old objects. That is in fact the idea which most of the elementary books on painting attach to the word invention; for, although they divide it into the artistic and poetical, the latter does not extend to the production of objects themselves, but is solely confined to arrangement and expression.[2] It is invention, yet not the invention of a whole, but of single parts, and of their position in respect to one another; it is invention, but of that lower kind which Horace recommends to his tragic poet!

> "Tuque
> Rectius Iliacum carmen deducis in actus,
> Quam si proferres ignota indictaque primus."[3]

Recommends, I repeat, not enjoins. Recommends as more easy, convenient, and advantageous, but does not prescribe as better and nobler in itself.

In fact, the poet who treats a well-known story or a well-known character, has already made considerable progress towards his object. He can afford to pass over a hundred cold details, which would otherwise be indispensable to the understanding of his whole; and the more quickly his audience comprehends this, the sooner their interest will be awakened. This advantage the painter also enjoys, when his subject is not new to us, and we recognize, at the first glance, the intention and meaning of his whole composition; at once not only see that his characters are speaking, but hear what they are saying. The most important effect depends on the first glance, and, if this involves us in laborious thought and reflexion, our longing to have our feelings roused cools down, and, in order to avenge ourselves on the unintelligible artist, we harden ourselves against the expression, and woe to him if he has sacrificed beauty to expression. We find in that case nothing to induce us to linger before his work.

[2] Betrachtungen ü. die Malerei, p. 159.
[3] Ars Poetica, 128.

What we see does not please us; and what to think meanwhile we do not know.

Let us now consider together, firstly, *That invention and novelty in his subjects are far from being the principal things we look for in an artist;* secondly, *That a familiar subject furthers and renders more easy the effect of his art.* And I think that we shall not look, with Count Caylus, for the reasons why the artist so seldom determines upon a new subject, either in his indolence, in his ignorance, or in the difficulty of the mechanical part of his art, which demands all his industry and all his time; but we shall find them more deeply founded, and shall perhaps be inclined to praise as an act of self-restraint, wise, and useful to ourselves, what at first sight appeared limitation of art, and curtailment of our pleasure. I do not fear that experience will contradict me; the painters will thank the Count for his good intentions, but will scarcely make such general use of him as he seems to expect. But even if they should, still in another hundred years a fresh Caylus would be necessary to bring the ancient subjects again into remembrance, and lead back the artist into that field where others before him had already gathered such undying laurels. Or do we desire that the public should be as learned as is the connoisseur from his books, that it should be acquainted and familiar with every scene of history and of fable which can yield a beautiful picture? I quite allow that the artists would have done better if, since the time of Raphael, they had made Homer their text-book instead of Ovid. But since it has happened otherwise, let them not attempt to divert the public from its old track, nor surround its enjoyment with greater difficulties than those which enjoyment must have in order to be what it is supposed to be.

Protogenes painted the mother of Aristotle. I do not know how much the philosopher paid him for the portrait. But whether it was instead of payment, or in addition to it, he imparted to him a piece of advice more valuable than the price itself. For I cannot imagine that it could have been intended for mere flattery, but believe that it was out of an especial regard to that necessity of art, namely of being intelligible to all, that he counselled

him to paint the exploits of Alexander; exploits with the fame of which, at that time, the whole world was ringing; and which he could well foresee would never be erased from the memory of future generations. But Protogenes had not sufficient steadiness to act upon this advice. "Impetus animi," says Pliny, "et quædam artis libido."[4] Too great a buoyancy of spirits (as it were) in art and a kind of craving after the curious and unknown, impelled him towards an entirely different class of subjects. He chose rather to paint the story of an Ialysus,[5] or a Kydippe; and, in consequence, we can no longer even guess what they represented.

[4] Plinius, xxxv. 36, 20.

[5] Richardson mentions this piece, when he wishes to illustrate the rule that in a painting nothing, however excellent in itself, should be allowed to distract the attention of the spectator from the principal figure. "Protogenes," he says, "had introduced a partridge into his famous painting of Ialysus, and had delineated it with so much skill that it seemed to be alive, and was the admiration of all Greece. Since, however, he saw that it attracted all eyes, to the prejudice of the main figure in the piece, he completely effaced it." (Traité de la Peinture, t. i. p. 46.) Richardson is mistaken. This partridge was not in the Ialysus, but in another painting of Protogenes, which was called the reposing or the idle satyr, Σάτυρος ἀναπαυόμενος. I should scarcely have noticed this error, which has arisen from a passage of Pliny being misunderstood, had not I found the same mistake in Meursius: "In eadem tabula, scilicet in qua Ialysus, Satyrus erat, quem dicebant Anapauomenon, tibias tenens" (Rhodi, lib. i. cap. xiv. p. 38). Something of the kind is found in Winckelmann also (On the Imitation of the Greek pieces in Painting and Sculpture, p. 56). Strabo is the only authority on which this story of the partridge rests, and he expressly distinguishes between the picture of Ialysus and that of the satyr leaning against a pillar, upon which the partridge sat (lib. xiv. p. 750, edit. Xyl). Meursius, Richardson, and Winckelmann have all misunderstood the passage of Pliny (lib. xxxv. § 36), because they paid no attention to the fact that two distinct pictures are spoken of; one, on account of which Demetrius did not conquer a town because he would not assault the place where it was; another which Protogenes painted during this siege. The first was the Ialysus, the second the satyr.

CHAPTER XII.

HOMER elaborates two kinds of beings and actions, visible and invisible. This distinction cannot be indicated by painting: in it everything is visible, and visible in but one way.

When, therefore, Count Caylus continues the pictures of invisible actions in an unbroken series with those of the visible; and when, in pictures of mixed actions, in which both visible and invisible beings take part, he does not, and perhaps cannot, specify how these last (which we only who are contemplating the picture ought to see in it) are to be introduced, so that the persons in the painting itself should not see them, or at least should not appear as if they necessarily did so—when, I say, Caylus does this, the whole series, as well as many single pieces, necessarily becomes in the highest degree confused, incomprehensible, and contradictory.

Still, ultimately, it would be possible, with book in hand, to remedy this fault: only the worst of it is this: when painting wipes away the distinction between visible and invisible beings, it at the same time destroys all those characteristic traits by which the latter and higher order is elevated above the former and lower.

For instance, when the gods, after disputing over the destiny of the Trojans, at length appeal to arms, the whole of this contest, according to the poet,[1] is waged invisibly; and this invisibility permits the imagination to magnify the scene, and allows it free scope to fancy the persons and actions of the gods, as great and as far exalted above those of ordinary humanity as ever it will. But painting must adopt a visible scene, the various necessary parts of which become the standard for the persons who take part in it: this standard the eye has ready at hand, and by its want of proportion to the higher beings, these last, which in the poet were great, upon the artist's canvas become monsters.

Minerva, against whom, in this contest, Mars assays

[1] Iliad, xxi. 385.

the first assault, steps backwards, and, with mighty hand, seizes from the ground a large, black, rough stone, which in olden times the united hands of men had rolled there for a landmark.—Iliad, xxi. 403.

ἡ δ' ἀναχασσαμένη λίθον εἵλετο χειρὶ παχείῃ,
κείμενον ἐν πεδίῳ, μέλανα, τρηχύν τε, μέγαν τε,
τὸν ῥ' ἄνδρες πρότεροι θέσαν, ἔμμεναι οὖρον ἀρούρης.

In order fully to realize the size of this stone, we must recollect that, though Homer describes his heroes as being as strong again as the strongest men of his own time, he tells us that even they were still further surpassed by the men whom Nestor had known in his youth. Now, I ask, if Minerva hurls a stone which no single man, even of the younger days of Nestor, could set up for a landmark—if, I ask, Minerva hurls such a stone as this at Mars, of what stature ought the goddess herself to be represented? If her stature is proportioned to the size of the stone, the marvellous disappears at once. A man who is three times the size that I am naturally can hurl a stone three times as great as I can. On the other hand, should the stature of the goddess not be proportionate to the size of the stone, there arises in the painting an evident improbability, the offensiveness of which will not be removed by the cold reflexion that a goddess must be possessed of superhuman strength. Where I see a greater effect, there I expect to see more powerful causes.

And Mars, overthrown by this mighty stone—

ἑπτὰ δ' ἐπέσχε πέλεθρα,

covered seven hides. It is impossible for the painter to invest the god with this extraordinary size; but, if he does not, then it is not Mars who is lying on the ground; at least, not the Mars of Homer, but a common warrior.[2]

[2] Quintus Calaber in his 12th book (vv. 158–185) has imitated this invisible contest of the gods with the manifest intention of improving upon his model. The grammarian, for instance, seems to have found it unseemly that a god should be struck to the ground with a stone. Accordingly, though he represents the gods as hurling against one another great masses of rock, torn from Mount Ida, these rocks are

Longinus says that he often felt that Homer appeared to raise his men to gods, and reduce his gods to men. Painting effects this reduction. In it everything that in the poet raises the gods above god-like men utterly vanishes. The strength, size, and swiftness, of which Homer always bestowed upon his deities a much higher and more extraordinary degree than he attributes to his most eminent heroes,[3] must sink, in the painting, to the

shivered against the limbs of the gods, and scattered, as sand, around them.

. οἱ δὲ κολώνας
χερσὶν ἀπορρήξαντες ἀπ' οὔδεος Ἰδαίοιο
βάλλον ἐπ' ἀλλήλους· αἱ δὲ ψαμάθοισι ὅμοιαι
ῥεῖα διεσκίδναντο θεῶν περὶ δ' ἄσχετα γυῖα
ῥηγνύμενα διὰ τύτθα

An artificial refinement, which is the destruction of the main subject. It heightens our conceptions of the bodies of the gods, but makes the weapons which they employ against one another ridiculous. If gods hurl stones at one another, these stones must be capable of injuring the gods, or we appear to see a troop of mischievous boys pelting one another with lumps of earth. Here, therefore, as ever, old Homer proves the wisest, and all the censure with which cold critics have assailed him, all the rivalry in which lesser geniuses have engaged with him, serve only to set his wisdom in its happiest light. Meanwhile I do not deny that Quintus's description contains some excellent and original features, but they are such as become the stormy fire of a modern poet rather than the modest greatness of Homer. The cry of the gods, for instance, the sound of which ascends to the heights of heaven, and pierces to the lowest depths of the earth, which shakes vehemently the mountain, and the town, and the fleet, but is not heard of man, seems to me a very significant stroke. The cry was so loud that the diminutive organs of human hearing were incapable of receiving it.

[3] No one who has even cursorily read Homer will question this assertion as far as regards strength and speed. It may be, however, that the reader will not recollect at once the examples from which it is clear that the poet also attributed to his divinities a size of body which far surpasses all human dimensions. The proofs I bring of this (in addition to the passage, quoted above, where Mars is described as covering seven hides of land) are the helmet of Minerva—

(κυνέην . . . ἑκατὸν πόλεων πρυλέεσσ' ἀραρυῖαν, Iliad, v. 744)

—which was large enough to cover as many troops as a hundred cities could bring into the field; the stride of Neptune (Iliad, xiii. 20): and the passage, in the description of the shield, which I consider the

common level of humanity; and Jupiter and Agamemnon, Apollo and Achilles, Ajax and Mars, become exactly the same beings, and can be recognized by nothing but their outward conventional symbols.

The means used by painters of giving us to understand that this or that object in their compositions must be considered as invisible is a thin cloud, with which they surround it on the side that is turned towards the other persons in the scene. This cloud appears to be borrowed from Homer. For if, in the tumult of the fight, one of the more important heroes falls into a danger from which none but divine power can save him, the poet represents him as being enveloped by the rescuing divinity in a thick cloud, or in night, and so carried off—as Paris is by Venus,[4] Idaeus by Neptune,[5] and Hector by Apollo.[6] And Caylus, when he designs paintings of such occurrences, never fails to recommend to the artist the introduction of this mist and cloud. Yet surely it is manifest to all that in the poet concealment in mist and

most conclusive proof all, where Mars and Minerva head the troops of the beleaguered town (Iliad, xviii. 516):—

. . Ἦρχε δ' ἄρα σφιν Ἄρης καὶ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη,
ἄμφω χρυσείω, χρύσεια δὲ εἵματα ἕσθην,
καλὼ καὶ μεγάλω σὺν τεύχεσιν, ὥς τε θεώ περ,
ἀμφὶς ἀριζήλω· λαοὶ δ' ὑπολίζονες ἦσαν·

Even the commentators on Homer, ancient as well as modern, have not been sufficiently careful to bear in mind the extraordinary dimensions here attributed to the gods; as may be gathered from the modifications which they seem to feel they are bound to introduce into their remarks upon the size of Minerva's helmet (v. the notes on the above-quoted passage in the edition of Clarke and Ernesti). But the loss of the sublime which we incur by never thinking of the Homeric deities except as the beings of ordinary size which they are generally represented on canvas, is beyond all computation. Painting, it is true, cannot be allowed to represent the gods as of this extraordinary size, but sculpture may in a certain measure; and I am convinced that the ancient masters are indebted to Homer both for the forms of their gods generally, and also for that colossal size which they sometimes bestow upon them in their statues (Herodot. lib. ii. p. 130, edit. Wessel). I reserve for another place some especial remarks upon the colossal, as well as the reasons I assign for its producing so powerful an effect in sculpture, but none at all in painting.

[4] Iliad, iii. 381.

[5] [Or rather, by Vulcan.—Ed.] see Iliad, v. 23.

[6] *Ibid.* xx. 444

night is nothing more than a poetical expression for rendering invisible. I have always, therefore, been astonished to find this poetical expression realized, and an actual cloud introduced into the painting, behind which, as behind a Spanish cloak, the hero stands concealed from his enemy. Such was not the intention of the poet. It is stepping beyond the limits of painting. For the cloud is here a real hieroglyphic, a mere symbolical token, which does not make the rescued hero invisible, but says to the beholders, You must represent him to yourself as invisible. It is here no better than the labels with inscriptions which are placed in the mouths of the figures in old Gothic paintings.

It is true that when Hector is being carried off by Apollo, Homer represents Achilles as making three thrusts with his lance into the thick mist at him—*τρὶς δ' ἠέρα τύψε βαθεῖαν.*[7] But in the language of the poet this means nothing more than that Achilles had become so furious that he made three thrusts with his lance before he perceived that his enemy was no longer in his presence. Achilles saw no actual mist; and the power which the gods possessed of rendering the objects of their protection invisible lay not in a mist, but in the rapidity with which they bore them away. But in order to express, at the same time, that this abduction was performed with such celerity that no human eye could follow the body so disappearing, the poet previously conceals it in a mist. Not that a mist appeared in the place of the body which had been carried off, but because we think of what is enveloped in a mist as invisible. Accordingly Homer sometimes inverts the case, and, instead of describing the object as rendered invisible, makes the subject struck with blindness. Thus Neptune darkens the eyes of Achilles when he rescues Æneas from his murderous hand, and, snatching him out of the midst of the melée, places him at once in the rear.[8] In fact, however, the eyes of Achilles are here no more blinded than, in the former passage, the rescued heroes were concealed in a cloud. But in both cases the poet has made these

[7] Iliad, xx. 446.

[8] *Ibid.* 321.

additions in order to render more palpable to our senses that extreme swiftness of disappearance which we call vanishing.

But painters have appropriated the Homeric mist, not only in those cases where Homer has himself used it, viz. when persons become invisible, or disappear; but also in all those where it is intended that the spectator should be able to perceive, in a painting, anything which the characters themselves, either all or part of them, cannot see. Minerva was visible to Achilles alone when she prevented him from coming to actual blows with Agamemnon. I know no other way, says Caylus, to express this than by concealing her, on the side nearest to the rest of the council, by a cloud. This is in complete opposition to the spirit of the poet. Invisibility is the natural condition of his divinities. There was needed no dazzling to render them invisible—no cutting off of the ordinary beams of light;[9] while, on the contrary, to render them visible, an enlightenment and enlargement

[9] It is true that Homer makes also divinities conceal themselves now and then in a cloud, but it is only when they wish to escape the observation of their fellow-deities; *e.g.* Iliad, xiv. 282, where Juno and Sleep, ἦρα ἐσσαμένω, go together to Mount Ida; the cunning goddess had every reason for concealing herself from Venus, who had lent her her girdle only on the pretext of making a very different expedition. In the same book (v 343) a golden cloud is required for the concealment of the love-intoxicated Jupiter and his spouse, to overcome her chaste reluctance.

πῶς κ' ἔοι, εἰ τις νῶϊ θεῶν αἰειγενετάων
εὖδοντ' ἀθρήσειε;

Juno was not afraid of being seen by men but by gods. And because Homer, some lines after, makes Jupiter say—

"Ηρη, μήτε θεῶν τόγε δείδιθι, μήτε τιν' ἀνδρῶν,
ὄψεσθαι· τοῖόν τοι ἐγὼ νέφος ἀμφικαλύψω
χρύσεον

—it does not follow that this cloud would have been required just to conceal them from the eyes of men. All he meant to say was, that, protected by it, his wife would be as invisible to the eyes of the gods as she always was to those of men. So also when Minerva puts Pluto's helmet upon her head (Iliad, v. 845), which had the same effect as enveloping herself in a cloud, she does it, not that she may be hidden from the Trojans, who either did not behold her at all or saw her under the form of Sthenelus, but simply that she may not be recognized by Mars.

of mortal vision was required. Thus it is not enough that in painting the cloud is an arbitrary and not a natural sign; this arbitrary symbol has not even the single, definite meaning which, as such, it could have; for it is used indiscriminately, either to represent the visible as invisible, or the invisible as visible.

CHAPTER XIII.

If Homer's works were entirely lost, and nothing remained to us of the Iliad and Odyssey but a series of paintings from them similar to those of which Caylus has sketched the outlines, should we be able, from these pictures—and they must be from the hand of the most accomplished master—to form the idea we now possess. I do not say, of the whole poet, but merely of his descriptive talent?

Let us put it to the test with the first piece we chance upon. Suppose it is the painting of the plague.[1] What do we see upon the artist's canvas? Dead corpses, burning funeral piles, the dying busied with the dead, while the angered god is seated upon a cloud, discharging his arrows. The greatest richness of this painting is poverty in the poet. For, if we were to restore Homer from it, what could we make him say? "Hereupon Apollo grew angry, and shot his arrows among the army of the Greeks. Many Greeks died, and their bodies were consumed." Now let us read Homer himself:—

βῆ δὲ κατ' Οὐλύμποιο καρήνων χωόμενος κῆρ,
τόξ' ὤμοισιν ἔχων, ἀμφηρεφέα τε φαρέτρην.
ἔκλαγξάν δ' ἄρ' ὀϊστοὶ ἐπ' ὤμων χωομένοιο,
αὐτοῦ κινηθέντος. ὅ δ' ἤϊε νυκτὶ ἐοικώς·
ἕζετ' ἔπειτ' ἀπάνευθε νεῶν, μετὰ δ' ἰὸν ἕηκεν·
δεινὴ δὲ κλαγγὴ γένετ' ἀργυρέοιο βιοῖο.
οὐρῆας μὲν πρῶτον ἐπῴχετο, καὶ κύνας ἀργούς·
αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ' αὐτοῖσι βέλος ἐχεπευκὲς ἐφιείς
βάλλ'· αἰεὶ δὲ πυραὶ νεκύων καίοντο θαμεῖαι.

The poet is as far above the painter as life is above

[1] Iliad, i. 44-53. Tableaux tirés de l'Iliade, p. 70.

the painting. Angered, armed with bow and quiver, Apollo descends from the peaks of Olympus. I not only see him coming down, I hear him. At every step of the indignant god the arrows rattle upon his shoulders. He strides on, like the night; now he sits over against the ships, and lets fly—fearfully clangs the silver bow—his first arrow at the mules and the hounds Next, with his more poisonous dart, he strikes the men themselves; and the funeral piles with their dead are everywhere ceaselessly blazing. The musical picture, which the words of the poet at the same time present, cannot be translated into another language. It is equally impossible even to guess it from the material painting, although this is the least superiority which the poetical description has over the latter. The principal one is this, that the poet conducts us to his last scene, the only part of his description which the material painting exhibits, through a whole gallery of pictures.

But perhaps the plague is not an advantageous subject for painting. Here is another, which possesses a greater charm for the eyes—the gods in council drinking.[2] An open, golden palace; arbitrary groups of the most beautiful and adorable forms, cup in hand, unto whom Hebe, eternal youth, is ministering. What architecture, what masses of light and shade, what contrasts, what variety of expression! Where am I to begin, and where to cease, feasting my eyes? If the painter thus charms me, how much more will the poet? I open him, and I find—myself deceived. I find four good but simple verses, which might serve very well for a motto beneath a painting; but which, though they contain the materials for a picture, are no picture themselves.

> Οἱ δὲ θεοὶ πὰρ Ζηνὶ καθήμενοι ἠγορόωντο
> χρυσέῳ ἐν δαπέδῳ μετὰ δέ σφισι πότνια Ἥβη
> νέκταρ ἐῴνοχόει· τοὶ δὲ χρυσέοις δεπάεσσιν
> δειδέχατ' ἀλλήλους, Τρώων πόλιν εἰσορόωντες·

An Apollonius, or a still more indifferent poet, could have said this as well; and Homer here remains as far below the artist as the artist fell short of him.

[2] Iliad, iv. 1–4. Tableaux tirés de l'Iliade, p. 30.

But, except in these four lines, Caylus cannot find a single picture in the whole fourth book of the Iliad. "However greatly," says he, "the fourth book is distinguished by the numerous exhortations to the combat, by the abundance of brilliant and strongly marked characters, and by the art with which the poet brings before us the multitude which he is about to set in motion, yet it is quite useless for the purposes of the artist." He might have added, "However rich it is in everything, that is held to constitute a poetical picture." Such pictures, in reality, occur in greater frequency and perfection throughout the fourth book than in any other. Where is to be found a more elaborate or a more illusive description than that of Pandarus, when, at the instigation of Minerva, he violates the truce, and discharges his arrow at Menelaus? Than that of the advance of the Grecian army? Than that of the mutual charge? Than that of the deed of Ulysses, by which he takes vengeance for the death of his friend Leucus?

But what conclusion is to be drawn from this; that not a few of the most beautiful descriptions of Homer furnish no picture for the artist? that the artist can derive pictures from him, where he himself has none? that those which he has, and the artist can use, would be but meagre descriptions if they showed us no more than the artist does? what else but a negative answer to the question I asked above? that from material paintings, of which the poems of Homer furnish the subjects, even though they were ever so numerous, or ever so excellent, we can come to no decision upon the descriptive talents of the poet.

CHAPTER XIV.

But if this be the case, and if a poem may be very productive of pictures, and still not be descriptive itself, while, on the contrary, another may be highly descriptive and yet yield little to the artist, there is an end of the theory of Count Caylus; which would make usefulness to the painter the touchstone of poets, and allot them

their rank according to the number of pictures which they offer the artist.[1]

Far be it from us, even by our silence, to suffer this theory to obtain the appearance of an established law. Milton would be the first to fall an innocent victim to it. For it appears that the contemptuous judgment which Caylus expresses of him should really be considered less as the national taste than as a consequence of his assumed rule. The loss of sight, he says, is probably the strongest point of similarity between Milton and Homer. It is true Milton cannot fill picture-galleries. But if the sphere of my bodily eyes, so long as I enjoy them, must needs also be that of my inner eye, I would consider the loss of them a gain indeed, inasmuch I should thereby be freed from this limitation.

"Paradise Lost" is not less the first epic after Homer because it offers but few subjects for painting, than the history of the Passion of Christ becomes a poem because we can scarcely set the point of a pin upon it without lighting on some passage which has called forth the exertions of a number of the greatest masters. The Evangelists recount the fact with the barest possible simplicity, and the artist makes use of its numerous parts without their having shown, on their side, the slightest spark of artistic genius in relating it. There are facts picturable and unpicturable, and the historian can narrate the most picturable as unpicturesquely as the poet has the power of setting forth picturesquely the most unpicturable.

To believe it to be otherwise is to suffer ourselves to be misled by the twofold meaning of a word. A poetical picture is not necessarily convertible into a material picture; but every feature, every combination of several features, by which the poet makes his object so palpable

[1] Tableaux tirés de l'Iliade, Avert. p. v.: "On est toujours convenu, que plus un poëme fournissait d'images et d'actions, plus il avait de supériorité en Poësie. Cette réflexion m'avait conduit à penser que le calcul des différents Tableaux, qu'offrent les Poëmes, pouvait servir à comparer le mérite respectif des Poëmes et des Poëtes. Le nombre et le genre des Tableaux que présentent ces grands ouvrages, auraient été une espèce de pierre de touche, ou plutôt une balance certaine du mérite de ces poëmes et du génie de leurs auteurs."

to us, that we become more conscious of this object than of his words, is picturesque, is a picture, because it brings us nearer to that degree of illusion of which the material picture is especially capable, and which is most quickly and easily called forth by the contemplation of the material picture.[2]

CHAPTER XV.

Now the poet, as experience shows, can raise this degree of illusion in us by the representation of other than visible objects. Consequently artists must necessarily renounce whole classes of pictures which the poet has at his command. Dryden's "Song for St. Cecilia's Day" is full of musical pictures which afford no employment for the brush; but I will not further digress with such instances, from which we can only learn at best that colours are not sounds, and ears not eyes.

I will still keep to the pictures of merely visible objects, for these are common to artist and poet. Why is it that many poetical descriptions of this kind are useless to the artist; and, on the contrary, many actual paintings, when treated by a poet, lose the principal part of their effect?

Examples may serve to guide me. I repeat the picture of Pandarus, in the fourth book of the Iliad, is one of the most minute and illusive in the whole of Homer. From the grasping of the bow to the flight of the arrow every moment is painted; and all these momentary periods follow

[2] What we call poetical pictures were, as the reader of Longinus will recollect, called *phantasiæ* by the ancients. And what we call illusion, viz. that part of those pictures which produces deception, was by them named *enargia*. For this reason it was said by some one, as Plutarch mentions (Erot. t. ii. p. 1351, edit. Henr. Steph.), that poetical *phantasiæ* were, on account of their *enargia*, dreams of a waking person—Αἱ ποιητικαὶ φαντασίαι διὰ τὴν ἐνάργειαν ἐγρηγορότων ἐνύπνιά εἰσιν. I much wish that modern treatises on poetry had made use of this nomenclature, and had entirely abstained from employing the word picture. We should thus have been spared a number of half-true rules, which principally rest upon the identity of an arbitrary term. Poetical *phantasiæ* would not have been so readily confined within the limits of a material painting; but as soon as *phantasiæ* were called *poetical pictures*, the foundation of the error was laid.

one another so closely, and yet are so distinctly entered upon, that if one did not know how a bow was managed, one might learn it merely from this picture.[1] Pandarus takes out his bow; strings it; opens the quiver; chooses an arrow well feathered, and still unused; sets the arrow to the string; draws back the string under the notch, together with the arrow; the string comes close to the breast; the iron point of the arrow to the bow; the great, round-shaped bow, clanging, springs wide apart; the arrow leaps away, and eagerly flies towards its mark.

Caylus cannot have overlooked this excellent picture. What, then, did he find there to make him esteem it incapable of affording employment to his artists? And why was it that the assembly of the gods, drinking in council, seemed to him more suitable for that purpose? In the one, as well as in the other, there are visible objects; and what more has the artist need of to occupy his canvas?

The difficulty must be this: although both objects, as visible, are alike capable of being subjects of painting in its strict sense; still, there is this essential difference between them, that the action of one is visible and progressive, its different parts happening one after another in sequence of time; while, on the other hand, the action of the other is visible and stationary, its different parts developing themselves in juxtaposition in space. But if painting, owing to its signs or means of imitation, which it can combine in space only, is compelled entirely to renounce time, progressive actions, as such, cannot be classed among its subjects, but it must be content with

[1] Iliad, iv. 105:—

αὐτίκ' ἐσύλα τόξον ἐΰξοον
καὶ τὸ μὲν εὖ κατέθηκε τανυσσάμενος, ποτὶ γαίῃ
ἀγκλίνας·
αὐτὰρ ὁ σύλα πῶμα φαρέτρης, ἐκ δ' ἕλετ' ἶὸν
ἀβλῆτα πτερόεντα, μελαινῶν ἕρμ' ὀδυνάων·
αἶψα δ' ἐπὶ νευρῇ κατεκόσμει πικρὸν ὀϊστόν.
ἕλκε δ' ὁμοῦ γλυφίδας τε λαβὼν, καὶ νεῦρα βόεια·
.
νευρὴν μὲν μαζῷ πέλασε, τόξῳ δὲ σίδηρον.
αὐτὰρ ἐπειδὴ κυκλοτερὲς μέγα τόξον ἔτεινεν,
λίγξε βιὸς, νευρὴ δὲ μέγ' ἴαχεν, ἆλτο δ' ὀϊστὸς
ὀξυβελής, καθ' ὅμιλον ἐπιπτέσθαι μενεαίνων.

simultaneous actions, or with mere figures, which by their posture lead us to conjecture an action. Poetry, on the contrary—

CHAPTER XVI.

However, I will endeavour to trace the matter from its first principles.

I reason thus: if it is true that painting and poetry in their imitations make use of entirely different means or symbols—the first, namely, of form and colour in space, the second of articulated sounds in time—if these symbols indisputably require a suitable relation to the thing symbolized, then it is clear that symbols arranged in juxtaposition can only express subjects of which the wholes or parts exist in juxtaposition; while consecutive symbols can only express subjects of which the wholes or parts are themselves consecutive.

Subjects whose wholes or parts exist in juxtaposition are called bodies. Consequently, bodies with their visible properties are the peculiar subjects of painting.

Subjects whose wholes or parts are consecutive are called actions. Consequently, actions are the peculiar subject of poetry.

Still, all bodies do not exist in space only, but also in time. They endure, and in each moment of their duration may assume a different appearance, or stand in a different combination. Each of these momentary appearances and combinations is the effect of a preceding one, may be the cause of a subsequent one, and is therefore, as it were, the centre of an action. Consequently, painting too can imitate actions, but only indicatively, by means of bodies.

On the other hand, actions cannot exist by themselves, they must depend on certain beings. So far, therefore, as these beings are bodies, or are regarded as such, poetry paints bodies, but only indicatively, by means of actions.

In its coexisting compositions painting can only make use of a single instant of the action, and must therefore choose the one which is most pregnant, and from which

what precedes and what follows can be most easily gathered.

In like manner, poetry, in its progessive imitations, is confined to the use of a single property of bodies, and must therefore choose that which calls up the most sensible image of the body in the aspect in which she makes use of it.

From this flows the rule as to the unity of descriptive epithets and moderation in the depiction of bodily objects.

I should put but little confidence in this dry chain of reasoning did I not find it completely confirmed by the practice of Homer, or rather had it not been the practice of Homer himself which led me to it. It is only on these principles that the sublime style of the Greek poet can be determined and explained, and at the same time a due value assigned to the directly opposite style of so many modern poets who have endeavoured to rival the painter in a department in which he must necessarily vanquish them.

I find that Homer describes nothing but progressive actions, and that when he paints bodies and single objects he does it only as contributory to such, and then generally only by a single touch. It is no wonder, then, that where Homer paints, the artist finds least to employ his pencil, and that his harvest is only to be found where the story assembles a number of beautiful bodies in beautiful attitudes, and in a space advantageous to art, however little the poet himself may depict these forms, these attitudes, and this space. If we go through the whole series of paintings, as Caylus proposes them, piece by piece, we shall find in each a proof of this remark.

I here quit the Count, who would make the palette of the artist the touchstone of the poet, in order to explain the style of Homer more closely.

For one thing, I say that Homer has generally but a single characteristic; a ship is for him now the black ship, now the hollow ship, now the swift ship, at most the well-rowed black ship. Farther than this he does not enter into any description of the ship. But of the sailing, the setting out, and hauling up of the ship he draws a detailed picture enough, of which, if the artist

wished to transfer the whole of it to his canvas, he would be compelled to make five or six different paintings.

If, indeed, special circumstances compel Homer to fix our attention longer upon a single object, he nevertheless makes no picture which could be an object of imitation to an artist; but by innumerable devices he contrives to set before our eyes a single object, as it would appear at distinct and successive instants, in each of which it is in a different stage, and in the last of which the artist must await the poet, in order to show us complete that which we have seen the poet forming. For instance, when Homer wants to show us the chariot of Juno, Hebe puts it together, piece by piece, before our eyes. We see the wheels, the axle, the seat, the pole, the traces and straps, not as they are when all fitted together, but rather as they are being put together under the hands of Hebe. Of the wheel alone does the poet give us more than a single feature; there he points out, one by one, the eight bronze spokes, the golden felloes, the tires of bronze, and the silver naves. One might almost say that, because there was more than one wheel, he felt bound to spend as much more time in their description as putting them on separately would have taken in reality.[1]

> Ἥβη δ' ἀμφ' ὀχέεσσι θοῶς βάλε καμπύλα κύκλα,
> χάλκεα ὀκτάκνημα, σιδηρέῳ ἄξονι ἀμφίς·
> τῶν ἦτοι χρυσέη ἴτυς ἄφθιτος, αὐτὰρ ὕπερθεν
> χάλκε' ἐπίσσωτρα, προσαρηρότα, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι.
> πλῆμναι δ' ἀργύρου εἰσὶ περίδρομοι ἀμφοτέρωθεν.
> δίφρος δὲ χρυσέοισι καὶ ἀργυρέοισιν ἱμᾶσιν
> ἐντέταται· δοιαὶ δὲ περίδρομοι ἄντυγές εἰσιν·
> τοῦ δ' ἐξ ἀργύρεος ῥυμὸς πέλεν· αὐτὰρ ἐπ' ἄκρῳ
> δῆσε χρύσειον καλὸν ζυγόν, ἐν δὲ λέπαδνα
> κάλ' ἔβαλε, χρύσεια.

Again, when Homer would show us how Agamemnon was clad, the king dons each article of his dress, separately, in our presence; his soft under-coat, his great mantle, his beautiful half-boots, and his sword. Now he is ready, and grasps his sceptre. We see the garments

[1] Iliad, v. 722.

whilst the poet is describing the operation of putting them on; but another would have described the robes themselves, down to the smallest fringe, and we should have seen nothing whatever of the action.[2]

μαλακὸν δ' ἔνδυνε χιτῶνα,
καλόν, νηγάτεον, περὶ δὲ μέγα βάλλετο φᾶρος.
ποσσὶ δ' ὑπὸ λιπαροῖσιν ἐδήσατο καλὰ πέδιλα·
ἀμφὶ δ' ἄρ' ὤμοισιν βάλετο ξίφος ἀργυρόηλον,
εἵλετο δὲ σκῆπτρον πατρώϊον, ἄφθιτον αἰεί.

This sceptre is here styled "the paternal," "the imperishable," as elsewhere one like it is described merely as χρυσέοις ἥλοισι πεπαρμένον, "golden-studded." But when a closer and more complete picture of this important sceptre is required, what does Homer do then? In addition to the golden studs, does he describe the wood and the carved head? He might have done so if he had intended to draw an heraldic description, from which, in after-times, another sceptre exactly like it could be made. And I am sure that many a modern poet would have given us such a description in the king-of-arms style, believing in the simplicity of his heart that he himself had painted the sceptre, because he had supplied the artist with the materials for so doing. But what does Homer care how far he leaves the painter in his rear? Instead of the appearance he gives us the history of the sceptre; first, it is being formed by the labour of Vulcan; next, it glitters in the hands of Jupiter; now it betokens the dignity of Mercury; now it is the martial wand of the warlike Pelops; now the shepherd's staff of the peaceful Atreus.[3]

σκῆπτρον, . . . τὸ μὲν Ἥφαιστος κάμε τεύχων·
Ἥφαιστος μὲν ἐδῶκε Διὶ Κρονίωνι ἄνακτι.
αὐτὰρ ἄρα Ζεὺς δῶκε διακτόρῳ Ἀργειφόντῃ·
Ἑρμείας δὲ ἄναξ δῶκεν Πέλοπι πληξίππῳ,
αὐτὰρ ὁ αὖτε Πέλοψ δῶκ' Ἀτρέϊ, ποιμένι λαῶν·
Ἀτρεὺς δὲ θνήσκων ἔλιπεν πολύαρνι Θυέστῃ·
αὐτὰρ ὁ αὖτε Θυέστ' Ἀγαμέμνονι λεῖπε φορῆναι,
πολλῇσιν νήσοισι καὶ Ἀργεϊ παντὶ ἀνάσσειν.

[2] Iliad, ii. 42. [3] *Ibid.* ii. 101.

Now I am better acquainted with this sceptre than if a painter were to place it before my eyes or a second Vulcan give it into my hands. I should not be surprised to find that one of the old commentators of Homer had admired this passage as the most perfect allegory of the origin, progress, establishment, and final hereditary succession of kingly power among men. I should indeed smile if I read that Vulcan, who made the sceptre, represented fire, which is indispensable to man's support, and that alleviation of his wants generally which persuaded the men of early times to submit themselves to the authority of an individual; that the first king, a son of Time (Ζεὺς Κρονίων), was a venerable patriarch, who was willing to share his power with a man remarkable for his eloquence and ability, with a Hermes (Διακτόρῳ Ἀργειφόντῃ), or to deliver it over entirely to him; that in course of time the clever orator, as the young state was threatened by foreign enemies, resigned his power into the hands of the bravest warrior (Πέλοπι πληξίππῳ); that the brave warrior, after he had exterminated his foes and assured the safety of the kingdom, artfully contrived to establish his son in his place; who, as a peace-loving ruler, and benevolent shepherd of his people (ποιμὴν λαῶν), first rendered them familiar with a life of pleasure and superfluity; at his death, therefore, the way was paved for the richest of his connexions (πολύαρνι Θυέστῃ) to acquire by gifts and bribery, and afterwards secure to his family, as a purchased possession, that power which hitherto confidence only had bestowed, and merit had esteemed a burden rather than a dignity. I should smile, but nevertheless I should be strengthened in my esteem for the poet to whom so much meaning could be lent. All this, however, is a digression from my subject; and I merely view the history of the sceptre as a device of art by which the poet causes us to linger over a single object, without entering into a cold description of its parts. Even when Achilles swears by his sceptre to revenge the neglect with which Agamemnon has treated him, Homer gives us the history of this sceptre. We see it putting forth leaves upon the hill; the steel divides it from the stem, strips it of

its leaves and bark, and renders it fit to serve the judges of the people, as an emblem of their godlike dignity.[4]

ναὶ μὰ τόδε σκῆπτρον, τὸ μὲν οὔποτε φύλλα καὶ ὄζους
φύσει, ἐπειδὴ πρῶτα τομὴν ἐν ὄρεσσι λέλοιπεν,
οὐδ' ἀναθηλήσει· περὶ γάρ ῥά ἑ χαλκὸς ἔλεψεν
φύλλα τε καὶ φλοιόν· νῦν αὖτέ μεν υἷες Ἀχαιῶν
ἐν παλάμῃς φορέουσι δικασπόλοι, οἵ τε θέμιστας
πρὸς Διὸς εἰρύαται.

It was not so much Homer's desire to describe two sceptres of different material and shape as to convey to our minds a clear and comprehensive image of that difference of power of which they were the emblems—the one the work of Vulcan, the other cut by some unknown hand upon the hill; the one an ancient possession of a noble house, the other destined for the hand of any to whom it might chance to fall; the one extended by a monarch over many isles and the whole of Argos, the other borne by one from the midst of the Greeks, to whom, with others, the maintenance of the laws had been entrusted. This was the real difference which existed between Agamemnon and Achilles: and which Achilles, in spite of all his blind rage, could not but confess.

But it is not only where he combines such further aims with his descriptions that Homer disperses the picture of the object over a kind of history of it; he follows the same course, where the picture itself is the only end in view, in order that its parts, which, naturally, are seen beside each other, may, by following upon one another, be seen as naturally in his description, and, as it were, keep pace with the progress of the narrative; *e.g.* he wishes to paint us the bow of Pandarus; a bow of horn, of such and such a length, well polished, and tipped with gold at either end. What does he? Enumerate all these dry details one after the other? Not at all: that might be called a specification or description of such a bow, but could never be called painting it. He begins with the chase of the wild goat out of whose horns the bow was made. Pandarus

[4] Iliad, i. 234.

himself had laid in wait for and killed it among the rocks; its horns were of an extraordinary size, and for that reason were destined by him to be turned into a bow. Then comes their manufacture; the craftsman joins them, polishes them, and tips them. And thus, as I said before, in the poet we see the making of that which, in the artist, we only see as made.[5]

τόξον εὔξοον ἰξάλου αἰγὸς
ἀγρίου, ὅν ῥά ποτ' αὐτὸς ὑπὸ στέρνοιο τυχήσας,
πέτρης ἐκβαίνοντα, δεδεγμένος ἐν προδοκῇσιν
βεβλήκει πρὸς στῆθος· ὁ δ' ὕπτιος ἔμπεσε πέτρῃ·
τοῦ κέρα ἐκ κεφαλῆς ἑκκαιδεκάδωρα πεφύκει·
καὶ τὰ μὲν ἀσκήσας κεραοξόος ἤραρε τέκτων,
πᾶν δ' εὖ λειήνας, χρυσείην ἐπέθηκε κορώνην.

I should never come to an end if I were to transcribe all the examples of this kind. They will occur, without number, to every one who is familiar with Homer.

CHAPTER XVII.

But, it will be answered, symbols of poetry are not merely progressive, but are also arbitrary; and, as arbitrary symbols, are certainly capable of representing bodies as they exist in space. Examples of this might be cited from Homer himself, whose shield of Achilles one need only call to mind in order to have the most decisive instance how comprehensively, and yet poetically, a single object may be described by its parts placed in juxtaposition.

I will reply to this twofold objection. I call it twofold because a justly drawn conclusion must stand even without an example; and, on the other hand, an example of Homer would be of great weight with me, even if I did not know any argument by which to justify it.

It is true that, since the symbols of speech are arbitrary, it is quite possible that by it the parts of a body may be made to follow upon one another just as easily as they

[5] Iliad, iv. 105.

stand side by side in nature. But this is a peculiarity of language and its signs generally, and not in so far forth as they are most adapted to the aim of poetry. The poet does not merely wish to be intelligible; the prose writer is contented with simply rendering his descriptions clear and distinct, but not the poet. He must awaken in us conceptions so lively, that, from the rapidity with which they arise, the same impression should be made upon our senses which the sight of the material objects that these conceptions represent would produce. In this moment of illusion we should cease to be conscious of the instruments—his words—by which this effect is obtained. This was the source of the explanation of poetical painting which we have given. But a poet should always produce a picture; and we will now proceed to inquire how far bodies, according to their parts in juxtaposition, are adapted for this painting.

How do we attain to a distinct conception of an object in space? First, we look at its parts singly; then at their combination; and, lastly, at the whole. The different operations are performed by our senses with such astonishing rapidity that they appear to us to be but one; and this rapidity is indispensable, if we are to form an idea of the whole, which is nothing more than the resultant of the ideas of the parts and of their combination. Supposing, therefore, that the poet could lead us, in the most beautiful order, from one part of the object to another; supposing that he knew how to make the combination of these parts ever so clear to us; still, how much time would be spent in the process? What the eye takes in at a glance he enumerates slowly and by degrees; and it often happens that we have already forgotten the first traits before we come to the last; yet from these traits we are to form our idea of the whole. To the eye the parts once seen are continually present; it can run over them time after time, while the ear, on the contrary, entirely loses those parts it has heard, if they are not retained in the memory. And even if they are thus retained, what trouble and effort it costs us to renew their whole impression in the same order, and with the same liveliness; to pass them at one time under review with but moderate

rapidity, in order to attain any possible idea of the whole!

I will illustrate this position by an example, which may be called a masterpiece of its kind.[1]

"There towers the noble gentian's lofty head
Far o'er the common herd of vulgar plants,
A whole flower people 'neath his flag is led,
E'en his blue brother bends and fealty grants.
In circled rays his flowers of golden sheen
Tower on the stem, and crown its vestment grey;
His glossy leaves of white bestreak'd with green
Gleam with the watery diamond's varied ray.
O law most just! that Might consort with Grace,
In body fair a fairer soul has place.

Here, like grey mist, a humble earth-plant steals,
Its leaf by Nature like a cross disposed;
The lovely flower two gilded bills reveals,
Borne by a bird of amethyst composed.
There finger-shaped a glancing leaf endues
A crystal stream with its reflexion green:
The flower's soft snow, stain'd with faint purple hues,
Clasps a striped star its blanchèd rays within.
On trodden heath the rose and emerald bloom,
And craggy hills a purple robe assume."

These are herbs and flowers, which the learned poet describes with great art, and faithfulness to nature; paints, but paints without illusion. I will not say that any one who had never seen these herbs and flowers could form little better than no conception of them therefrom; it may be that all poetical descriptions require a previous acquaintance with their object; nor will I deny that, if any one has the advantage of such acquaintance, the poet might awaken in him a more lively idea of some of the parts. I only ask him what is the case with respect to the conception of the whole? If this also is to be vivid, no individual prominence must be given to

[1] See Von Haller's 'Alpen.'

single parts, but the higher light must seem distributed to all alike; and our imagination must have the power of running over all with the same speed, that it may at once construct from them that which can be at once seen in nature. Is this the case here? And if it is not, how can it have been said that "the most faithful delineation of a painter would prove weak and dull in comparison with this poetical description"?[2] It is far below the expression of which lines and colours upon a surface are capable; and the critic who bestowed this exaggerated praise upon it must have contemplated it from an entirely false point of view; he must have looked to the foreign ornaments which the poet has interwoven with it, to its elevation above vegetable life, and to the development of those inner perfections for which external beauty serves merely as the shell, more than to this beauty itself, and the degree of liveliness and faithfulness in the representation of it which the painter and poet can respectively preserve. Yet it is the latter only with which we have any concern here; and any one who would say that the mere lines—

"In circled rays his flowers of golden sheen
Tower on the stem, and crown its vestment grey;
His glossy leaves of white bestreak'd with green
Gleam with the watery diamond's varied ray"

—that these lines, in regard to the impression they create, can vie with the imitation of a Huysum, must either have never questioned his feelings, or be deliberately prepared to belie them. They are verses that might be very beautiful, recited with the flower before us, but which by themselves express little or nothing. In each word I hear the elaborating poet, but I am very far from seeing the object itself.

Once more, therefore, I do not deny to language generally the power of depicting a corporeal whole according to its parts. It can do so, because its symbols, although consecutive, are still arbitrary; but I do deny

[2] Breitinger's Kritische Dichtkunst, vol. ii. p. 807.

it to language, as the means of poetry, because such verbal descriptions are entirely deficient in that illusion which is the principal end of poetry. And this illusion, I repeat, cannot fail to be wanting to them, because the coexistence of the body comes into collision with the consecutiveness of language, and though, during the solution of the former into the latter, the division of the whole into its parts is certainly made easy to us, the ultimate recomposition of these parts into their whole is rendered extremely difficult, and often impossible.

Everywhere, therefore, where illusion is not the question, where the writer appeals only to the understanding of his readers, and merely aims at conveying distinct and, as far as it is possible, complete ideas, these descriptions of bodies, so justly excluded from poetry, are quite in place; and not only the prose writer, but even the didactic poet (for where he is didactic he ceases to be a poet), may make use of them with great advantage. Thus, for instance, in his Georgics, Virgil describes a cow fit for breeding—

> "Optima torvæ
> Forma bovis, cui turpe caput, cui plurima cervix,
> Et crurum tenus a mento palearia pendent.
> Tum longo nullus lateri modus: omnia magna,
> Pes etiam; et camuris hirtæ sub cornibus aures.
> Nec mihi displiceat maculis insignis et albo,
> Aut juga detrectans, interdumque aspera cornu
> Et faciem tauro propior, quæque ardua tota,
> Et gradiens ima verrit vestigia cauda."[3]

Or a beautiful colt:—

> "Illi ardua cervix,
> Argutumque caput, brevis alvus obesaque terga;
> Luxuriatque toris animosum pectus," &c.[4]

Here it is plain that the poet thought more about the discrimination of the different parts than about the whole. His object is to enumerate the points of a beautiful colt, or useful cow, in such a manner that on meeting with one or more of them we should be enabled

[3] Georg. lib. iii. 51. [4] *Ibid.* 79.

to form a judgment of their respective values. But whether or not these good points can be recomposed into an animated picture is a matter of perfect indifference to him.

With the exception of this use of it, the detailed description of corporeal objects, without the above-mentioned device of Homer for changing what is coexisting in them into what is really successive, has always been acknowledged by the finest judges to be mere cold, insignificant work, to which little or no genius can be attributed. When the poetaster, says Horace, can do nothing more, he at once begins to paint a grove, an altar, a brook meandering through pleasant meads, a rushing stream, or a rainbow:—

"Lucus et ara Dianæ,
Et properantis aquæ per amœnos ambitus agros,
Aut flumen Rhenum, aut pluvius describitur arcus." [5]

Pope, when a man, looked back with great contempt upon the descriptive efforts of his poetic childhood. He expressly desires that he who would worthily bear the name of poet should renounce description as early as possible, and declares that a purely descriptive poem is like a banquet consisting of nothing but sauces.[6] On Von

[5] De Art. Poet. 16.

[6] Prologue to the Satires, v. 340:—

"That not in Fancy's maze he wander'd long,
But stoop'd to Truth, and moraliz'd his song."

Ibid. v. 147.

. . . "Who could take offence,
While pure Description held the place of Sense?"

Warburton's remarks upon this last passage may be considered as an authentic explanation by the poet himself. "He uses PURE equivocally, to signify either chaste or empty; and has given in this line what he esteemed the true character of descriptive poetry, as it is called—a composition, in his opinion, as absurd as a feast made up of sauces. The use of a picturesque imagination is to brighten and adorn good sense; so that to employ it only in description is like children's delighting in a prism for the sake of its gaudy colours; which, when frugally managed and artfully disposed, might be made to represent and illustrate the noblest objects in nature." Both poet and commentator, it is true, look at the question from a moral rather than an artistic point of view. So much the better: it appears as valueless from one point as from the other.

Kleist's own authority I can assert that he took little pride in his 'Spring.' Had he lived longer, he would have thrown it into a totally different form. He intended to methodize it, and reflected upon the means of causing the multitude of images, which he appears to have taken at random, now here, now there, from revivified creation, to arise and follow one another in a natural order before his eyes. He would at the same time have followed the advice which Marmontel, doubtlessly referring to his eclogues, had bestowed on several German poets. He would have converted a series of images, thinly interspersed with feelings, into a succession of feelings but sparingly interwoven with images.[1]

CHAPTER XVIII.

And yet could even Homer be said to have fallen into this cold description of material objects?

I venture to hope that there are but few passages which can be cited in support of this; and I feel assured that these will prove to be of such a kind as to confirm the rule from which they appear to be exceptions.

I maintain that succession of time is the department of the poet, as space is that of the painter.

To introduce two necessarily distant points of time into one and the same painting, as Fr. Mazzuoli has the rape of the Sabine women and their subsequent reconciliation of their husbands and relations, or as Titian has the whole history of the prodigal son, his disorderly life, his misery, and his repentance, is an encroachment by the painter upon the sphere of the poet which good taste could never justify.

To enumerate one by one to the reader, in order to afford him an idea of the whole, several parts or things,

[1] Poëtique Française, t. ii. p. 501: "J'écrivais ces réflexions avant que les essais des Allemands dans ce genre (l'Eglogue) fussent connus parmi nous. Ils ont exécuté ce que j'avais conçu; et s'ils parviennent à donner plus au moral et moins au détail des peintures physiques, ils excelleront dans ce genre, plus riche, plus vaste, plus fécond, et infiniment plus naturel et plus moral que celui de la galanterie champêtre."

which, if they are to produce a whole, I must necessarily in nature take in at one glance, is an encroachment by the poet upon the sphere of the painter, whereby he squanders much imagination to no purpose.

Yet just as two equitable neighbouring powers, while not allowing either to presume to take unbecoming freedom within the heart of the dominions of the other, yet on their frontiers practise a mutual forbearance, by which both sides render a peaceful compensation for those slight aggressions which, in haste or from the force of circumstances, they have found themselves compelled to make on one another's privileges; so do painting and poetry.

In support of this view I will not cite the fact that in great historical pictures the single moment is almost always extended; and that perhaps there is scarcely any piece very rich in figures in which every one of them is in the same motion and attitude in which he would have been at the moment of the main action; some being represented in the posture of a little earlier, others in that of a little later, period. This freedom the master must rectify by a certain refinement in the arrangement, by bringing his several characters either prominently forwards, or placing them in the background, which allows them to take a more or less momentary share in what is passing. I will merely avail myself of a remark which Herr Mengs has made upon Raphael's drapery: "There is a cause," he says, "for all his folds, either in their own weight or in the motion of the limbs. We can often tell from them how they have been before. Herein Raphael has even sought to give significance. We can see from the folds whether a leg or arm, previously to its movement, was in a backward or forward posture; whether a bent limb had been, or was in the act of being, straightened; or whether it had been straight and was being contracted."[1] It is indisputable that in this case the artist combines two different moments in one. For, as that part of the drapery which rested upon the hinder foot would, unless the material were very stiff and entirely unsuitable

[1] Gedanken über die Schönheit u. über den Geschmack in der Malerei, p. 69.

for painting, immediately follow it in its motion forwards, there is no moment at which the garment can form any other folds than those which the present attitude of the limb requires; and, if it is made to fall in other folds, the limb is represented at the present moment and the drapery at the one previous to it. Yet in spite of this, who would be punctilious with the artist who has seen good to present us with both these moments at once? Who would not much rather praise him for having had the understanding and courage to fall into a slight error for the sake of attaining greater perfection of expression?

The poet deserves similar indulgence. His progressive imitation properly permits him to deal with only one side, one property of his material object, at a time. But, when the happy arrangement of his language enables him to do this with a single word, why should he not now and then venture to subjoin a second? Why not, if it requires the trouble, a third, or even a fourth? I have already remarked that in Homer, for example, a ship is only the black ship, or the hollow ship, or the swift ship: at the very most, the well-manned black ship. I wish, however, to be understood as speaking of his style generally; here and there a passage may be found where he adds the third descriptive epithet, *καμπύλα κύκλα, χάλκεα, ὀκτάκνημα*,[2] round, bronze, eight-spoked wheels. Also where the fourth *ἀσπίδα πάντοσε εἴσην, καλὴν, χαλκείην, ἐξήλατον*,[3] "a beautiful, brazen, wrought, all-even shield." Who would censure him for it? who is not rather grateful to him for this little luxuriancy, when he feels what a good effect it may produce in some few suitable passages.

But I will not allow the actual justification either of the poet or the painter to rest upon the above-mentioned analogy of two friendly neighbours. A mere analogy proves and justifies nothing. Their real justification is the fact that in the work of the painter the two different moments border so closely upon one another that, without hesitating, we count them as one; and that in the poet the several features, representing the various parts and

[2] Iliad, v. 722. [3] *Ibid.* xii. 294.

properties in space, follow one another with such speed and condensed brevity that we fancy that we hear all at once.

And herein, I maintain, Homer is aided in an unusual degree by the excellence of his language. It not only allows him all possible freedom in the accumulation and combination of epithets, but its arrangement of these multiplied epithets is so happy that we are relieved from the prejudicial delay of the noun to which they refer. In one or more of these advantages the modern languages fail entirely. Some which, as the French, for instance, must convert the καμπύλα κύκλα, χάλκεα, ὀκτάκνημα into such a periphrasis as "the round wheels, which were made of brass and had eight spokes," express the sense, but annihilate the picture; yet here the picture is everything and the sense nothing; and the one without the other turns a very lively poet into a most tedious twaddler. This fate has often befallen Homer under the pen of the conscientious Dacier. Our German tongue, on the other hand, though it can replace the epithets by equivalent adjectives quite as short, has not the power of imitating the advantageous arrangement of the Greek. We say, indeed, "the round, brazen, eight-spoked" (*die runden ehernen, achtspeichigten*), but "wheels" (*Räder*) drags behind. Who does not feel that three distinct predicates, before we learn the subject, can only produce a weak and confused picture? The Greek joins the subject at once to the first predicate, and leaves the others to follow. He says, "round wheels, brazen, eight-spoked." Thus we know at once what he is speaking of, and become acquainted, conformably with the natural order of thought, first with the thing of which he speaks, and afterwards what is accidental to it. This advantage our language has not; or, perhaps, I should say possesses, but can rarely use without being equivocal. It comes to the same thing. For, if we place the epithets after the substantive, they must stand *in statu absoluto;* we must say, "round wheels, brazen, and eight-spoked" (*runde Räder, ehern und achtspeichigt*). Now, in this *statu*, our adjectives are just the same as adverbs; and, if we construe them as such with

the next verb that is predicated of the subject, must produce not unfrequently a completely false and at all events a very ambiguous meaning.

But I am wasting my time on trifles, and appear as if I meant to forget the shield—that famous picture, the shield of Achilles, in respect of which especially, Homer, in ancient times, was regarded as a master of painting.[1] A shield at any rate, it will be said, is a single material object, which a poet cannot be allowed to describe according to its parts in juxtaposition. And yet Homer, in more than a hundred splendid lines, has described its material, its form, and all the figures which filled its enormous surface, so circumstantially and closely, that modern artists have not found it difficult to produce a drawing of it corresponding in all points.

My reply to this particular objection is, that I have already answered it. Homer does not describe the shield as finished and complete, but as it is being wrought. Thus he here also makes use of that knack of art which I have commended; changing that which, in his subject, is coexistent into what is consecutive, and thereby converting a tedious painting of a body into a vivid picture of an action. We see, not the shield, but the divine craftmaster as he executes it. He steps with hammer and tongs before his anvil, and, after he has forged the plates out of the raw material, the figures which he destines for the ornament of the shield rise, one after another, out of the bronze, under our eyes, beneath the finer strokes of his hammer. We never lose sight of him until all is ready; and when it is complete, we feel indeed astonishment at the work, but it is the confident astonishment of an eye-witness, who has seen it produced.

This cannot be said of the shield of Æneas in Virgil. The Roman poet either did not here feel the refinement of his model, or the objects which he wished to introduce upon his shield appeared to him of such a kind as not well to admit of being executed before our eyes. They were prophecies, in respect to which it would certainly have been

[1] Dionysius Halicarnassi in Vita Homeri apud Th. Gale in Opusc. Mythol. p. 401.

inappropriate if the god had uttered them in our presence as distinctly as the poet has afterwards explained them. Prophecies, as such, require a darker language, in which the real names of the persons of futurity, of whom they speak, are out of place; yet, apparently, these real names were all-important to the courtier poet.[5] But if this defence justifies him, it does not do away with the bad effect which his deviation from Homer's style here produces. All readers of refined taste will allow that I am right. The preparations which Vulcan makes for his work are nearly the same in Virgil as in Homer. But, whilst in Homer not only the preparations for labour, but the labour itself, is seen, Virgil, after he has given us a general view of the god employed with his Cyclopes—

[5] I see that Servius adduces another argument in Virgil's justification: for Servius also has remarked the difference that exists between Virgil's shield and Homer's: "Sane interest inter hunc et Homeri clypeum; illic enim singula dum fiunt narrantur; hic vero perfecto opere nascuntur; nam et hic arma prius accipit Æneas, quam spectaret; ibi postquam omnia narrata sunt, sic a Thetide deferuntur ad Achillem" (Ad. v. 625, lib. viii. Æneid). And why? Because, in Servius's opinion, not only the unimportant events, which the poet mentions, but

. . . . "genus omne futuræ
Stirpis ab Ascanio, pugnataque in ordine bella,"

were wrought upon the shield of Æneas. It would not then have been possible for the whole series of posterity to have been mentioned individually, and for the wars they fought to have been related in chronological order by the poet, as quickly as they would have been executed on the shield by Vulcan. This seems to be the meaning of the somewhat obscure passage in Servius: "Opportune ergo Virgilius, quia non videtur simul et narrationis celeritas potuisse connecti, et opus tam velociter expedire, ut ad verbum posset occurrere." As Virgil could only bring forward a small part of the *non enarrabile textum clypei*, so also he could not even do it, whilst Vulcan was forging it; but was forced to be silent until all was ready. I wish, for Virgil's sake, that Servius's reasoning was altogether without foundation: my defence would be far more creditable for him. What necessity was there for his introducing the whole of Roman history into his shield? In but a few pictures Homer made his shield an epitome of everything that happens in the world. One would be almost led to think that Virgil, though he despaired of surpassing Homer in the execution of his shield, and in his choice of subjects for it, hoped at least to exceed him in the number of his subjects. And what would have been more childish?

"Ingentem clypeum informant
. . . Alii ventosis follibus auras
Accipiunt, redduntque; alii stridentia tingunt
Æra lacu; gemit impositis incudibus antrum;
Illi inter sese multa vi brachia tollunt
In numerum, versantque tenaci forcipe massam,"[6]

lets the curtain fall at once, and transports us to quite a different scene, whence he gradually conduets us to the valley, in which Venus comes to Æneas with the arms, that have been, in the meantime, completed. She sets them against the trunk of an oak, and, after the hero has sufficiently gazed at, admired, felt, and tried them, the description, or rather the painting, of the shield begins, which by the everlasting "Here is" and "There is," "Next there stands" and "Not far off is seen," grows so cold and tedious that all the poetic ornament which a Virgil could bestow on it is required to prevent its becoming intolerable. Since this picture, in the next place, is not delineated by Æneas, being, as he is, amused with the mere figures, and knowing nothing about their meaning—

"Rerumque ignarus imagine gaudet;"

nor by Venus, although she must presumably have known just as much of the future destinies of her beloved progeny as did her easy-going husband; but since the explanation is given by the mouth of the poet himself, therefore the action of the poem is manifestly at a standstill whilst it lasts. Not one of his characters takes any part in it; nor is the sequel in the least affected, whether this or anything else is represented on the shield; the clever courtier, who adorns his subject with every kind of flattering allusion, is transparent in it all, but not the great genius, which relies entirely upon the intrinsic merit of his work, and rejects all external means of being interesting. The shield of Æneas is, in consequence, really an interpolation, simply and solely designed to flatter the national pride of the Roman people. It is a foreign stream turned by the poet

[6] Æneid, viii. 447.

into his main river to make the latter a little more stirring. The shield of Achilles, on the contrary, is the growth of its own fruitful soil: for a shield was to be made; and, since nothing that is necessary comes from the hand of the divinity without grace also, it must needs have ornament. But the art lay in treating these decorations merely as such; in interweaving them into the main subject, and making it furnish the opportunity of showing them to us: all this could only be accomplished in the style of Homer. Homer makes Vulcan expend his skill in decoration because he has to produce, and whilst he does produce, a shield that is worthy of him. Virgil, on the other hand, appears to make him forge the shield for the sake of its decorations, since he considers them of sufficient importance to be described particularly, long after the shield has been completed.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE objections which the elder Scaliger, Perrault, Terasson, and others have raised against Homer's shield, as well as the replies made to them by Dacier, Boivin, and Pope, are well known. To me these last appear often to commit themselves too far, and, from a confidence in the goodness of their cause, to have maintained opinions as incorrect as they are ineffective for the justification of the poet.

To meet the main objection, that Homer fills the shield with such a number of figures that they cannot possibly be contained within its circumference, Boivin undertook to have it drawn, giving heed to the required measurement. His idea of the several concentric circles is very ingenious, although the words of the poet do not afford any ground for it, and there are no traces of the ancients having employed such compartments on their shields. I should rather, since Homer calls it σάκος πάντοσε δεδαιλωμένον, "a shield artistically wrought on all sides," obtain a larger surface by calling in the concave side to my assistance: for that the ancient artists did not leave this side unorna-

mented is proved from Pheidias' shield of Minerva.[1] But it was not enough that Boivin neglected to avail himself of this advantage, he unnecessarily increased in number the designs themselves; for which he was obliged to find room in a space thus diminished by one half, whilst he broke up into two or three distinct pictures what the poet manifestly intended for only one. I know very well what was his inducement to do so, but he ought not to have been influenced by it. Instead of labouring to satisfy the requirements of his opponents, he should have shown them that their demands were unreasonable.

I shall be able to make myself more clearly comprehended by an example. When Homer says of a town[2]—

λαοὶ δ' εἰν ἀγορῇ ἔσαν ἀθρόοι· ἔνθα δὲ νεῖκος
ὠρώρει· δύο δ' ἄνδρες ἐνείκεον εἵνεκα ποινῆς
ἀνδρὸς ἀποφθιμένου· ὁ μὲν εὔχετο, πάντ' ἀποδοῦναι,
δήμῳ πιφαύσκων· ὁ δ' ἀναίνετο, μηδὲν ἑλέσθαι.
ἄμφω δ' ἰέσθην ἐπὶ ἴστορι πεῖραρ ἑλέσθαι.
λαοὶ δ' ἀμφοτέροισιν ἐπήπυον ἀμφὶς ἀρωγοί.
κήρυκες δ' ἄρα λαὸν ἐρήτυον· οἱ δὲ γέροντες
εἵατ' ἐπὶ ξεστοῖσι λίθοις, ἱερῷ ἐνὶ κύκλῳ·
σκῆπτρα δὲ κηρύκων ἐν χέρσ' ἔχον ἠεροφώνων.
τοῖσιν ἔπειτ' ἤϊσσον, ἀμοιβηδὶς δὲ δίκαζον.
κεῖτο δ' ἄρ' ἐν μέσσοισι δύω χρυσοῖο τάλαντα.

—I do not believe that he intended to draw more than one picture—that of a public trial about the contested payment of a heavy fine for a manslaughter that had been committed. An artist who wishes to execute this subject cannot make use of more than one moment of it at once: either the moment of the accusation, or of the examination of witnesses, or the giving judgment, or any other moment, before, after, or between these points, that seems most suitable to him. This moment he renders as pregnant as possible, and executes it with all the illusion which constitutes the great superiority of art over poetry in the representation of visible objects. The poet is infinitely surpassed in this respect, and, if he wishes to paint

[1] "Scuto ejus in quo Amazonum prælium cælavit intumescente ambitu parmæ; ejusdem concava parte deorum et gigantum dimicationem." —Plinius, lib. xxxvi. 4. 4.

[2] Iliad, xviii. 497.

the same object in words without complete failure, what can he do but avail himself likewise of his own peculiar advantages? And these are, the liberty to extend his description over the time preceding and subsequent to the single instant which is the subject of the picture; and the power of showing us not only what the artist shows us, but also that which the latter can only leave to our conjecture. Through this liberty and this power alone is the poet enabled to rival the artist. Their works will appear most similar when their effects are equally lively, not when the one imparts to the soul through the ear neither more nor less than the other presents to the eye. If Boivin had judged the passage of Homer according to this principle, he would not have divided it into as many pictures as he thought he perceived distinct periods of time in it. It is true that all that Homer says could not have been combined in a single picture. The accusation and defence, the production of witnesses, the clamours of the divided crowd, the endeavours of the herald to still the tumult, and the decision of the arbitrators, are things which must follow one another, and cannot exist beside one another. Still, to express myself scholastically, what is not contained in the painting *actu* is there *virtute;* and the only true method of imitating a material picture by words is that which combines what is virtually implied in it with what is actually visible, and does not confine itself within the limits of art; within which the poet indeed can reckon the data for a picture, but can never produce a picture itself.

In the same manner Boivin divides the picture of the beleaguered town[3] into three different designs. He might just as well have divided it into a dozen parts as three. For when he had once failed to seize upon the spirit of the poet, and had required him to submit to the unities of material painting, he might have found so many transgressions of these unities that it would have been almost necessary to allot a separate compartment on the shield to every separate trait of the poet. But, in my opinion, Homer has not drawn more than ten distinct pictures upon

[3] Iliad, xviii. 509.

the entire shield, each of which he begins with ἐν μὲν ἔτευξε, or ἐν δὲ ποίησε, or ἐν δ' ἐτίθει, or ἐν δὲ ποίκιλλε Ἀμφιγυήεις.[4] Where there are not these introductory words, there is no ground for assuming a distinct picture. On the contrary, all they enclose must be considered as a single picture, wanting only that arbitrary concentration into a single point of time which, as a poet, he was in no way bound to observe. I should rather say that had he maintained and rigidly complied with it, had he abstained from introducing the smallest feature, which could not have been combined with it in a material representation of his picture, in a word, had he so acted as his critics would have desired him, he would not, it is true, have laid himself open to the censure of these gentlemen, but he would not have won the admiration of any man of taste.

Pope approved of the divisions and designs of Boivin, but thought that he had in addition made an extraordinary discovery, when he further argued that each of these subdivided pictures could be indicated according to the most rigid rules of painting in vogue at the present day. He found contrast, perspective, and the three unities all most strictly adhered to in them. But he knew quite well that, on the authority of good and trustworthy evidence, painting at the time of the Trojan war was still in its cradle. Homer therefore must either, by virtue of his divine genius, have not so much carried out what painting could accomplish at that time or in his own day, as divined what it was capable of accomplishing absolutely; or the evidence itself cannot be of so authoritative a nature as to outweigh the palpable testimony of the skilfully wrought shield. He who will may adopt the former

[4] The first picture commences at line 483, and finishes at line 489. The second lasts from 490–509; the third from 510–540; the fourth from 541–549; the fifth from 550–560; the sixth from 561–572; the seventh from 573–586; the eighth from 587–589; the ninth from 590–605; and the tenth from 606–608. The third picture is the only one that has not the introductory words quoted in the text; but from the words at the commencement of the second—

ἐν δὲ δύω ποίησε πόλεις,

and from the circumstances of the case itself, it is plain enough that it must be a separate picture.

hypothesis; of the last, at least, no one will be persuaded who knows anything more of the history of art than the mere data of the historians. For the belief that painting in Homer's time was still in its infancy is not only supported by the authority of Pliny and other writers, but is grounded upon the decisive proof afforded by the works of art enumerated by the ancients, that many centuries later art had not advanced much further, and that the paintings of a Polygnotus, for instance, would be far from able to sustain the test which Pope believes the pictures in Homer's shield are capable of undergoing. The two large pieces of this master at Delphi, of which Pausanias has left us so minute a description,[5] are plainly devoid of all perspective. The ancients possessed no knowledge of this branch of art, and what Pope adduces to show that Homer had some idea of it only proves that his own ideas of it were of the most imperfect nature.[6] "That Homer," he says, "was not a stranger to aerial *perspective* appears in his expressly marking the distance of object from object: he tells us, for instance, that the two spies lay a little remote from the other figures; and that the oak, under which was spread the banquet of the reapers, stood *apart;* what he says of the valley sprinkled all over with cottages and flocks appears to be a description of a large country in perspective. And indeed a general argument for this may be drawn from the number of figures on the shield, which could not be all expressed in their full magnitude, and this is therefore a sort of proof that the art of lessening them according to perspective was known at that time."[7]

[5] Phocic. cap. xxv.–xxxi.

[6] To prove that I have just grounds for what I say of Pope, I will quote in the original the following passage from him: "That he was no stranger to aerial perspective appears in his expressly marking the distance from object to object; he tells us," &c. I repeat, Pope has here made an entirely false use of the term *aerial perspective* (perspective aerienne); for it has nothing to do with the lessening of size in proportion to distance, but merely expresses the change and increasing faintness of colour, according to the condition of the air, or medium through which it is viewed. Any one who could commit this blunder must have been ignorant of the whole matter.

[7] [Observations on the shield of Achilles, Pope's Iliad, B. xviii. vol. v. p. 169, edited by Gilbert Wakefield, B.A. (London, T. Longman, and B. Lawse, 1796).—Tr.]

Mere observance of the law, derived from optical experience, that a distant object appears less than a neighbouring one, is far from constituting perspective in a picture. Perspective requires a single point of view, a definite, natural horizon; and it was in this that the ancient paintings were deficient. The ground in the pictures of Polygnotus was not horizontal, but was so excessively raised at the back that the figures which ought to have stood behind appeared to be above one another. And if this position of different figures, and of groups of them, was universal, as seems to be shown by the ancient bas-reliefs, where the hindmost figures always stand higher than, and overlook, the foremost, it is natural to assume that it is employed in Homer's description, and that those of his designs which, in accordance with this practice, can be combined in a single picture are not needlessly separated. Consequently the twofold scene in the peaceful town, through the streets of which a joyous wedding procession moves, whilst a weighty lawsuit is being decided in the market-place, does not necessarily involve two pictures. Homer certainly might easily think of them as one, since he pictured the whole town from so high a point of view that he could obtain an uninterrupted view of the streets and market-place at the same time.

It is my opinion that real perspective in painting was discovered, as it were, experimentally by means of scene painting; and, even when this last had reached perfection, it must still have been far from easy to apply its rules to a picture painted on a single surface. At any rate, in the paintings of a later period among the antiquities of Herculaneum, such numerous and manifold offences against perspective are to be found as would not be pardoned even in a novice.[8]

But I will spare myself the trouble of collecting my scattered observations on a question of which I may hope to find the most satisfactory solution in the history of art promised us by Herr Winckelmann.[9]

[8] Betracht. über die Malerei, p. 185.
[9] Written in the year 1763.

CHAPTER XX.

But I return to my old path, if indeed one who is rambling only for his own pleasure can be said to have any.

What I have asserted of bodily objects generally is doubl true when applied to beautiful bodily objects.

Material beauty arises from the harmonious effect of numerous parts, all of which the sight is capable of comprehending at the same time. It requires, therefore, that these parts should lie in juxtaposition; and since things whose parts lie in juxtaposition are the peculiar objects of the plastic arts, these it is, and these only, which can imitate material beauty.

The poet—since he can only exhibit in succession its component parts—entirely abstains from the description of material beauty as beauty. He feels that these parts, ranged one after another, cannot possibly have the effect that they produce when closely arranged together; that the concentrating glance which, after their enumeration, we try to cast back upon them imparts to us no harmonious image; that it surpasses the power for human imagination to represent to oneself what effect such and such a mouth, nose, and eyes will produce together unless we can call to mind from nature or art a similar composition of like parts.

And in this respect Homer is the ensample of all ensamples. He says Nireus was beautiful; Achilles was still more beautiful; Helen was endowed with a godlike beauty. But nowhere does he enter upon a detailed description of these beauties; and yet the whole poem is based upon the loveliness of Helen. How a more modern poet would have dilated upon it!

There was a certain Constantinus Manasses who attempted to adorn his cold chronicles with a description of Helen. I have to thank him for his attempt. For I really do not know where else I could have extracted an example from which it would have been so palpably clear how foolish it may prove to venture upon that which

Homer in his wisdom has left unattempted. When I read there:—[1]

ἦν ἡ γυνὴ περικαλλής, εὔοφρυς εὐχρουστάτη,
εὐπάρειος, εὐπρόσωπος, βοῶπις, χιονόχρους,
ἑλικοβλέφαρος, ἁβρά χαρίτων γέμον ἅλσος,
λευκοβραχίων, τρυφερά, κάλλος ἀντικρὺς ἔμπνουν,
τὸ πρόσωπον καταλευκόν, ἡ παρειὰ ῥοδόχρους,
τὸ πρόσωπον ἐπίχαρι, τὸ βλέφαρον ὡραῖον,
κάλλος ἀνεπιτήδευτον, ἀβάπτιστον, αὐτόχρουν,
ἔβαπτε τὴν λευκότητα ῥοδοχρία πυρινή,
ὡς εἴ τις τὸν ἐλέφαντα βάψει λαμπρᾷ πορφύρᾳ.
δειρὴ μακρά, καταλευκός, ὅθεν, ἐμυθουργήθη
κυκνογενῆ τὴν εὔοπτον Ἑλένην χρηματίζειν.

[1] Constantinus Manasses. Compend. Chron. p. 20, edit. Venet. Mme Dacier was well pleased with the whole of this portrait by Manasses, short of the tautologies: "De Helenæ pulchritudine omnium optime Constantinus Manasses, nisi in eo tautologiam reprehendas (Ad Dyctin Cretensem, lib. i. cap. 3, p. 5). She also quotes, after Mezeriac (Comment. sur les Epitres d'Ovide, ii. 361), the descriptions which Dares, Phrygius, and Cedrenus give of the beauty of Helen. In the first there occurs a trait which sounds rather curious. Dares pointedly says of Helen that she had a mole between her eyebrows: "notam inter duo supercilia habentem." Surely that was no beauty! I wish that the French lady had given her opinion upon it. My own belief is that the word nota is here corrupt, and that Dares is speaking of what the Greeks used to call *μεσόφρυον*, and the Latins *glabella*. The eyebrows of Helen, he means to say, did not meet, but were slightly separated. The ancients were divided in their taste upon this point. Some admired a space between the eyebrows, some not (Junius, de Pictura Vet. lib. iii. cap. 9, p. 245). Anacreon held a middle course; the eyebrows of his beloved maiden were neither strikingly divided, nor did they run completely into each other. They died away gently into a single point. He says to the artist who is painting her (Od. 28):—

τὸ μεσόφρυον δὲ μή μοι
διάκοπτε, μήτε μίσγε.
ἐχέτω δ', ὅπως ἐκείνη,
τὶ λεληθότως σύνοφρυν
βλεφάρων ἵτυν κελαινήν.

This is Pauw's reading, but the ordinary one admits of the same sense being put upon it, which has been rightly given by Henr Stephanus:—

"Supercilii nigrantes
Discrimina nec arcus
Confundito nec illos:
Sed junge sic ut anceps
Divortium relinquas,
Quale esse cernis ipsi."

I seem to see stones being rolled up a mountain, upon whose summit a magnificent structure is to be raised out of them, but which all of their own accord roll down on the other side. What image does this throng of words leave behind it? What was the appearance of Helen? If a thousand persons were to read this description, would not every one of them form a different idea of her?

Still, it is true the politic verses of a monk are not poetry. Let us listen to Ariosto whilst he describes his bewitching Alcina:—[2]

If then I have hit upon Dares' meaning, what word must be read for *notam*? Perhaps *moram*. At any rate it is certain that *mora* means not only the lapse of time before the occurrence of any event, but also the impediment, the space, which separates one thing from another.

"Ego inquieta montium jaceam mora,"

is the wish of the raving Hercules in Seneca (v. 1215), which passage Gronovius has well explained as follows: "Optat se medium jacere inter duas Symplegades, illarum velut moram, impedimentum, obicem; qui eas moretur, vetet aut satis arcte conjungi, aut rursus distrahi." The same poet uses the phrase lacertorum moræ as equivalent to *junctura* (Schrœderus, ad. v. 762, Thyest.).

[2] Orlando Furioso, Canto vii. St. 11–15: "She was in person so well formed as was not to be depicted but by skilled painters: with yellow hair, long and knotted up, than which no gold is more resplendent and lustrous. In her delicate cheek were spread the mingled hues of roses and lilies, of smooth ivory was her joyous brow, whose expanse was confined within due bounds.

"Beneath two black and very delicate arches are two black eyes, or rather two shining suns, sweetly piteous in look and slow in movement: around which love seems to play and fly, and shoot thence his whole quiver, visibly invading hearts. Thence in the middle of the countenance descends the nose which envy knows not how to make better.

"Beneath which, as it were between two vales, is the mouth endued with native cinnabar. Here are two rows of choicest pearls which a beauteous and sweet lip shuts and opens. Thence issue the gracious words which make gentle each rude and rugged heart. Here forms itself that kindly smile which discloses in itself a paradise upon earth.

"White as snow is the beautiful neck, as milk the breast: the neck is round, the breast swelling and large. Two young apples made of pure ivory come and go like a wave on the ocean shore when a gentle gale falls on the sea." (The rest Argus himself would not have been able to see; but it was easy to judge that what was concealed agreed with what was visible to the eye.)

"The arms show themselves of due measure: and the white hand is often seen, somewhat long and of small breadth, on which no knot is visible, nor vein protrudes. At the extremity of this glorious form the short and dry and rounded foot is seen. The angelic semblances in heaven conceived are not to be concealed beneath any veil."

"Di persona era tanto ben formata,
Quanto mai finger san Pittori industri:
Con bionda chioma, lunga ed annodata,
Oro non è, che più risplenda, e lustri,
Spargeasi per la guancia delicata
Misto color di rose e di ligustri.
Di terso avorio era la fronte lieta,
Che lo spazio finia con giusta meta.

"Sotto duo negri, e sottilissimi archi
Son duo negri occhi, anzi duo chiari soli,
Pietosi a riguardare, a mover parchi,
Intorno cui par ch' Amor scherzi, e voli,
E ch' indi tutta la faretra scarchi,
E che visibilmente i cori involi.
Quindi il naso per mezzo il viso scende,
Che non trova l' invidia ove l' emende.

"Sotto quel sta, quasi fra due vallette,
La bocca sparsa di natio cinabro;
Quivi due filze son di perle elette,
Che chiude ed apre un bello e dolce labro;
Quindi escon le cortesi parolette
Da render molle ogni cor rozzo e scabro;
Quivi si forma quel suave riso,
Ch' apre a sua posta in terra il paradiso.

"Bianca neve è il bel collo, e 'l petto latte:
Il collo è tondo, il petto colmo e largo.
Due pome acerbe, e pur d'avorio fatte,
Vengono e van, come onda al primo margo,
Quando piacevole aura il mar combatte.
Non potria l'altre parti veder Argo:
Ben si può giudicar che corrisponde,
A quel ch' appar di fuor, quel che s' asconde.

"Mostran le braccia sua misura giusta;
E la candida man spesso si vede,
Lunghetta alquanto, e di larghezza angusta,
Dove nè nodo appar, nè vena eccede.

Si vede al fin della persona augusta
Il breve, asciutto, e ritondetto piede.
Gli Angelici sembianti nati in cielo
Non si ponno celar sotto alcun velo."

Milton, when speaking of the Pandemonium, says—

"The work some praise, and some the architect."

The praise of the one, therefore, does not always imply the praise of the other. A work of art may deserve all possible approbation without affording any special renown to the artist. On the other hand, an artist may justly demand our admiration, even though his work do not afford us full satisfaction. This principle should never be forgotten, and it will often enable us to reconcile entirely conflicting judgments. This is the case here. Dolce in his dialogues on painting makes Aretino speak in the most exaggerated terms of the stanzas I have just quoted.[3] I, on the contrary, have selected it as an instance of painting without picture. We are both in the right. Dolce's admiration is called forth by the knowledge of physical beauty which the poet displays in it; whilst I look merely to the effect which this knowledge, when expressed in words, can produce upon my imaginative powers. Dolce concludes from this knowledge that good poets are no less good painters; and I from this effect, that what is most easily expressed by the painter through lines and colours is most difficult to be expressed by words. Dolce recommends Ariosto's description to all artists as the most perfect imago of a beautiful woman, whilst I hold it up to all poets as a most instructive warning not to essay still more disastrously what with an Ariosto must needs fail. It may be that when Ariosto says—

"Di persona era tanto ben formata,
Quanto mai finger san Pittori industri"

[3] Dialogo della Pittura, intitolato l'Aretino: Firenze, 1735, p. 178: "Se vogliono i Pittori senza fatica trovare un perfetto esempio di bella Donna, leggano quelle stanze dell'Ariosto, nelle quali egli discrivo mirabilmente le bellezze della Fata Alcina: e vedranno parimente, quanto i buoni Poeti siano ancora essi Pittori."

—he proves that he thoroughly understood the rules of proportion as they have always been studied by the most industrious artist from nature and the antique.[4] It may be that in the mere words—[5]

"Spargeasi per la guancia delicata
Misto color di rose e di ligustri"

—he shows himself to be the most complete master of colouring, a very Titian.[6] We may, from the fact that he only compares the hair of Alcina to gold, but does not call it golden, conclude, with equal significance, that he disapproved of the use of an actually golden tint. We may even, in the descending nose—

"Quindi il naso per mezzo il viso scende"

—discover the profile of those ancient Greek noses which were afterwards borrowed from the Grecian artists by the Romans. What is the use of all this learning and observation to us readers, whose desire is to believe that we see a beautiful woman, and to feel at that belief some of those soft emotions of the blood which accompany the actual sight of beauty? If the poet does know by what proportions a beautiful form is produced, do we thereby know it too? And even if we do know it, does he cause us to see these proportions here? or does he make the difficulty of remembering them in a lively and compre-

[4] Dialogo della Pittura, intitolato l'Arctino: "Ecco, che, quanto alla proportione, l'ingeniosissimo Ariosto assegna le migliore, che sappiano formar le mani de' più eccellenti Pittori, usando questa voce industri, per dinotar la diligenza, che conviene al buono artéfice."

[5] *Ibid.* p. 182: "Qui l'Ariosto colorisce, e in questo suo colorire dimostra essere un Titiano."

[6] *Ibid.* p. 180: "Poteva l'Ariosto nella guisa, che ha detto chioma bionda, dir chioma d'oro: ma gli parve forse che avrebbe avuto troppo del poetico. Da che si può ritrar, che'l Pittore dee imitar l'oro, e non metterlo (come fanno i Miniatori) nelle sue Pitture, in modo, che si possa dire, que'capelli non sono d'oro, ma pur che risplendano, come l'oro." Dolce's subsequent quotation from Athenæus is only remarkable for its inaccuracy. I speak of it at another place.

Ibid. p. 182: "Il naso, che discende giù, avendo peraventura la consideratione a quelle forme de' nasi, che si veggono ne' ritratti delle belle Romane antiche."

hensible manner in the least degree lighter? A forehead confined within the proper limits—

. "la fronte,
Che lo spazio finia con giusta meta;"

a nose in which envy itself finds nothing to improve—

"Che non trova l'invidia, ove l'emende;"

a hand somewhat long and small in breadth—

"Lunghetta alquanto, e di larghezza angusta;"

what image do all these general phrases call up? In the mouth of a drawing master who wished to call the attention of his scholars to the beauties of the class-model they might mean something; for let his pupils have but one look at his model and they see the proper limits of the joyous forehead, they see the fairest chiselling of the nose, the narrowness of the delicate hand. But in the poet I see nothing, and perceive with vexation the uselessness of my most strenuous efforts to see something.

In this point, in which he can imitate Homer merely by doing nothing, Virgil also has been tolerably happy. His Dido, too, is never anything more to him than "pulcherrima Dido." When he wishes to be more circumstantial about her he is so in the description of her rich dress and magnificent appearance—

"Tandem progreditur
Sidoniam picto chlamydem circumdata limbo:
Cui pharetra ex auro, crines nodantur in aurum,
Aurea purpuream subnectit fibula vestem."[1]

If therefore, on this account, any one were to apply to him, what that ancient artist said to a pupil who had painted a Helen covered with ornaments, "Since you could not paint her beautiful, you have at least made her fine," Virgil would reply, "It is not my fault that I could not paint her beautiful; the blame falls upon the limits of my art; be it my praise to have restrained myself within these limits."

I must not here forget the two songs of Anacreon, in

[1] Æneid, iv. 136.

which he analyses for us the beauty of his mistress, and of his Bathyllus.[3] The device which he employs makes all good. He imagines that he has a painter before him, who is working under his eye. Thus, says he, paint me the hair; thus the brow, the eyes, the mouth; thus the neck and bosom; thus the hip and hands. What the artist could only put together part by part the poet could only give directions for part by part. It is not his intention that in these oral directions to the painter we should feel and acknowledge the whole beauty of the beloved object; he himself perceives the incapability of words to express it, and for that very reason summons to his aid the expression of art, the illusion of which he so highly extols, that the whole song appears to be an ode in the praise of art rather than of his mistress. He sees not her image, but herself, and fancies that she is on the point of opening her mouth to speak.

ἀπέχει βλέπω γὰρ αὐτήν·
τάχα, κηρέ, καὶ λαλήσεις.

In his sketch of Bathyllus also the praise of the beautiful boy is so interwoven with that of the art and the artist, that it becomes doubtful in whose especial honour Anacreon composed the song. He combines the most beautiful portions from different pictures in which the pre-eminent loveliness of these portions was the characteristic; the neck is borrowed from an Adonis, the breast and hands from a Mercury, the thighs from a Pollux, the belly from a Bacchus; until at last he sees the whole of Bathyllus in a finished Apollo of the artist.

μετὰ δὲ πρόσωπον ἔστω,
τὸν Ἀδώνιδος παρελθὼν
ἐλεφάντινος τράχηλος·
μεταμάζιον δὲ ποίει
διδύμας τε χεῖρας Ἑρμοῦ,
Πολυδεύκεος δὲ μηρούς,
Διονυσίην δὲ νηδύν.
.
τὸν Ἀπόλλωνα δὲ τοῦτον
καθελών, ποίει Βάθυλλον.

[3] Od. xxviii. xxix.

Lucian also knew not how to convey any idea of the beauty of Panthea otherwise than by a reference to the most lovely female statues of the old artists.[9] Yet what is this but an acknowledgment that language by itself is here without power; that poetry falters and eloquence grows speechless, unless art, in some measure, serve them as an interpreter.

CHAPTER XXI.

But does not poetry lose too much if we deprive her of all pictures of physical beauty? Who would deprive her of them? Because we endeavour to inspire her with a dislike of a single path, in which she expects to attain to such pictures while searching after and painfully wandering among the footsteps of her sister art, without ever reaching the same goal as she: because, I say, we would debar her from such a path as this, do we exclude her from every other, where art in her turn must gaze after her steps?

Even Homer, who so diligently abstains from all detailed descriptions of material beauties, from whom we but just learn by a passing notice that Helen had white arms[1] and beautiful hair,[2] even he, for all this, knew how to convey to us an idea of her beauty, which far exceeds anything that art with this aim is able to accomplish. Let us call to mind the passage where Helen steps into an assembly of the elders of the Trojan people. The venerable old men see her, and one said to the other—

> οὐ νέμεσις, Τρῶας καὶ ἐϋκνήμιδας Ἀχαιοὺς
> τοιῇδ' ἀμφὶ γυναικὶ πολὺν χρόνον ἄλγεα πάσχειν·
> αἰνῶς ἀθανάτῃσι θεῇς εἰς ὦπα ἔοικεν.[3]

What can impart a more lively idea of beauty than that cold old age should confess it to be worthy of that war which had cost so much blood and so many tears.

What Homer could not describe by its constituent parts he forces us to acknowledge in its effect. Paint for us, ye poets, the delight, the affection, the love, the rapture which

[9] Εἰκόνες, vol. ii. p. 481. Edit. Reitz.
[1] Iliad, iii. 121. [2] *Ibid.* 329. [3] *Ibid.* 156.

beauty produces, and you have painted beauty itself. Who can image to himself as ugly the beloved object at whose sight Sappho confesses she is deprived of all sense and thought? Who does not believe that he sees the most perfectly beautiful form as soon as he sympathizes with the feelings which only such a form can awaken? We believe we enjoy the sight that Ovid enjoyed,[4] not because he exhibits to us the beautiful form of his Lesbia part by part—

"Quos humeros, quales vidi tetigique lacertos!
Forma papillarum quam fuit apta premi!
Quam castigato planus sub pectore venter!
Quantum et quale latus! quam juvenile femur!"

but because he does it with that licentious intoxication by which our longings are so easily aroused.

Again, another means by which poetry comes up with art in the description of typical beauty is the change of beauty into charm. Charm is beauty in motion, and is, for this very reason, less suitable to the painter than to the poet. The painter can only leave motion to conjecture, while, in fact, his figures are motionless. Consequently, with him, charm becomes grimace. But in poetry it remains what it is, a transitory beauty that we would gladly see repeated. It comes and goes; and since we can generally recall to our minds a movement more easily and vividly than mere forms or colours, charm necessarily, in the same circumstances, produces a stronger effect upon us than beauty. All that is pleasing and stirring in the description of Alcina is charm. Her eyes make an impression upon us, not because they are black and fiery, but because—

"Pietosi a riguardar, a mover parchi"

—they look gracefully around her, and move slowly because love hovers over them, and empties his whole quiver from them. Her mouth enraptures, not because two rows of choice pearls are inclosed by the native vermilion of her lips, but because here is formed that lovely smile which in itself already opens a paradise upon earth; because from

[4] Ovid. Amor. lib. i. eleg. v. 18.

it proceeds the sound of those friendly words by which every rude heart is softened. Her bosom charms, less because milk and ivory and apples are called up by its whiteness and delicate shape, than because we see it softly swell and fall, as the wave upon the extreme edge of the shore, when the zephyr playfully contends with the ocean.

> "Due pome acerbe, e pur d'avorio fatte,
> Vengono e van, come onda al primo margo,
> Quando piacevole aura il mar combatte."

I am convinced that a few such traits as these, compressed into one or two stanzas, would produce a far higher effect than all the five to which Ariosto spreads them out while weaving amongst them cold features of a beautiful form, far too learned to affect our feelings.

Anacreon himself chose to fall into the seeming impropriety of requiring an impossibility of the painter, rather than to leave the form of his mistress unenlivened by charm.

> τρυφεροῦ δ' ἔσω γενείου,
> περὶ λυγδίνῳ τραχήλῳ
> Χάριτες πέτοιντο πᾶσαι.

He bids the artist make all the graces hover around her soft chin, her marble neck! How so? According to the closest interpretation of the words, his command was incapable of being executed in painting. The painter might impart to the chin the most beautiful rounding and the sweetest dimple, "Amoris digitulo impressum" (for the ἔσω appears to me to allude to a dimple). He might impart the loveliest carnation to the neck, but further he could not go. The turnings of this beauteous neck, the play of the muscles, by which that dimple became now more, now less visible, all that is properly charm lay beyond his power. The poet said all his art could say to make beauty palpable to us, in order that, in imitation of him, the painter also should aim at the highest expression of it in his. It is a fresh example of the observation I made above, that the poet, even when speaking of works of art, is not bound to restrain himself in his description within the limits of art.

CHAPTER XXII.

Zeuxis painted a Helen, and had the courage to write below the picture those renowned lines of Homer in which the enraptured elders confess their sensations. Never have painting and poetry been engaged in another such contest. The victory remained undecided, and both deserved a crown.

For just as the wise poet showed us the beauty, which he felt he could not paint according to its constituent parts, merely in its effect, so the no less wise painter showed us that beauty by nothing but those parts, and held it unbecoming for his art to have recourse to any other means of help. His picture consisted of a single, nude, standing figure of Helen. For it is probable that it was the same that he painted for the people of Cortona.[1]

Let us compare with this, for curiosity's sake, the picture which Caylus sketches for the modern artist from these lines of Homer. "Helen, covered with a white veil, appears in the midst of several old men, Priam among the number, who is recognizable by the emblems of his royal dignity. The artist must especially exert his skill to make us feel the triumph of beauty in the eager glances and in all the expressions of astonished admiration depicted on the countenances of the old men. The scene is over one of the gates of the town. The background of the painting may be lost either in the open sky, or against the higher buildings of the town. The first would be the boldest, but the one would be as suitable as the other."

But let us suppose this picture executed by the first master of our time, and compare it with the work of Zeuxis. Which will show the real triumph of beauty? The latter, in which I feel it itself, or the former, in which I am obliged to gather it from the grimaces of excited grey-beards? "Turpe senilis amor!" an expression of eagerness makes the most venerable face ridiculous, and an old man who betrays youthful desires is even a disgusting object. This objection cannot be applied to Homer's elders; for the

[1] Val. Maximus, lib. iii. cap. 7. Dionysius Halicarnass. Art. Rhet. cap. 12. Περὶ λογῶν ἐξετάσεως.

passion which they feel is but a momentary spark, which their wisdom at once extinguishes; and is intended to conduce to the honour of Helen, but not to put themselves to shame. They confess their feelings, and immediately add—

ἀλλὰ καὶ ὣς τοίη περ ἐοῦσ', ἐν νηυσὶ νεέσθω,
μηδ' ἡμῖν τεκέεσί τ' ὀπίσσω πῆμα λίποιτο.

Without this resolution, they would have been old fools; which is, in fact, what they appear in Caylus's picture. And to what is it they are directing their eager glances? To a masked, veiled figure. Is that Helen? It is incomprehensible to me how Caylus could here leave her the veil. It is true Homer expressly gives her one:—

αὐτίκα δ' ἀργεννῇσι καλυψαμένη ὀθόνῃσιν,
ὥρμᾶτ' ἐκ θαλάμοιο.

But it was in order to pass along the streets in it; and, even if the elders do express their admiration before she appears to have taken off or thrown back her veil, it was not the first time they had seen her. Their confession need not, therefore, arise from the present momentary view of her, but they might have often experienced before the feelings which on this occasion they for the first time acknowledged. In the painting, however, it is nothing of the kind. When I see old men in raptures I naturally expect to see what it is that has produced them; and I am exceedingly surprised if, as before said, I perceive nothing but a masked and veiled figure at which they are fervently gazing. How much of Helen is there in this figure? Her white veil, and part of her well-proportioned outline, as far as outline can be visible beneath drapery. But perhaps it was not the intention of the Count that her face should be covered, and he merely mentions the veil as a part of her dress. If this is the case (his words, "Hélène couverte d'un voile blanc," are scarcely capable of such an interpretation), I find another cause for astonishment. He gives the artist the most careful directions about the expression in the faces of the old men; but upon the beauty in the countenance of Helen he does not waste a single word. This demure

beauty, timidly approaching with the glitter of a repentant tear in her eye. What? Is the highest beauty so familiar to our artists that they require no reminding of it? Or is expression more than beauty? And in painting, as upon the stage, does the plainest actress immediately pass for a charming princess if her prince does but make a passionate declaration of love to her?

In truth the painting of Caylus would bear the same relation to that of Zeuxis as pantomime does to the most exalted poetry.

Homer was incontestably more industriously studied by the ancients than by us. Yet one finds no mention of any such great number of pictures for which ancient artists were indebted to him.[2] They appear to have made industrious use of a mere indication on the part of the poet of particular material objects of beauty; these they painted, and fully felt that it was in these objects alone that they were capable of really rivalling the poet.[3] Besides the Helen, Zeuxis had also painted the Penelope; and the Diana of Apelles resembled Homer's in the accompanying train of her nymphs. I will take this occasion to mention that the passage of Pliny, in which this last is spoken of, stands in need of an emendation.[4] The ancient artists do

[2] Fabricii Bibliothec. Græc. lib. ii. cap. vi. p. 345.

[3] [That is to say: the ancients must have become fully aware of the general unsuitability of Homer for pictorial illustration, hence they eagerly availed themselves of slight indications of subjects, in the manner that Lessing goes on to exemplify.—Ed.]

[4] Pliny says of Apelles (lib. xxxv. sect. 36, 17): "Fecit et Dianam sacrificantium virginum choro mixtam; quibus vicisse Homeri versus videtur id ipsum describentis." Nothing can be more true than this praise. A beautiful goddess, surrounded by beautiful nymphs, and taller than them by the whole of her majestic forehead, is indeed a subject fitter for painting than for poetry. The word *sacrificantium* however is, in my opinion, very suspicious. What is the goddess doing among sacrificing virgins? Is this the occupation of the companions of Diana in Homer? Not at all; they roam with her over hill and through forest; they hunt, sport, and dance (Odyss. vi. 102):—

οἵη δ' Ἄρτεμις εἶσι κατ' οὔρεος ἰοχέαιρα,
ἢ κατὰ Τηΰγετον περιμήκετον ἢ Ἐρύμανθον,
τερπομένη κάπροισι καὶ ὠκείῃς ἐλάφοισι·
τῇ δέ θ' ἅμα Νύμφαι, κοῦραι Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο,
ἀγρονόμοι παίζουσι

not appear to have had any taste for painting actions taken from Homer, simply because they offer a rich composition, striking contrasts, and artistical chiaroscuro; nor could they have indulged such a taste so long as art restrained itself within the narrow limits of its highest

Pliny therefore must have written, not *sacrificantium*, but *venantium*, or something like it; perhaps *sylvis vagantium*, to which amendment the number of the letters which have been changed would pretty nearly correspond: *saltantium* would answer most closely to the word *παίζουσι*, which is used by Homer. Virgil, moreover, in his imitation of this passage, speaks of Diana as dancing with her nymphs (Æneid, i. 497):—

> "Qualis in Eurotæ ripis, aut per juga Cynthi
> Exercet Diana choros".

Spence's ideas on this passage are curious (Polymetis, Dial. viii. p. 102): "This Diana," he says, "both in the picture and in the descriptions, was the Diana Venatrix, though she was not represented either by Virgil, or Apelles, or Homer, as hunting with her nymphs; but as employed with them in that sort of dances which of old were regarded as very solemn acts of devotion." In a note he adds: "The expression of *παίζειν*, used by Homer on this occasion, is scarce proper for hunting; as that of *choros exercere*, in Virgil, should be understood of the religious dances of old, because dancing, in the old Roman idea of it, was indecent, even for men, in public; unless it were the sort of dances used in honour of Mars, or Bacchus, or some other of their gods." Spence speaks of those festive dances which were reckoned by the ancients in the number of their religious ceremonies. And it is in this sense that he thinks the word *sacrificare* is used by Pliny: "It is in consequence of this that Pliny, in speaking of Diana's nymphs on this very occasion, uses the word *sacrificare* of them; which quite determines these dances of theirs to have been of the religious kind." He forgets that in Virgil Diana herself joins in the dance: "exercet Diana choros." If then this dance was a religious service, in whose honour did Diana dance? In her own, or in that of another divinity? Either supposition is ridiculous. And even if the ancient Romans considered that dancing in general was not very becoming in a serious person, it does not follow that their poets were obliged to transfer this seriousness to the manners of the gods, whose mode of life had been already described and settled by the Greek poets in a very different manner. When Horace says of Venus (Od. iv. lib. i.)—

> "Jam Cytherea choros ducit Venus; imminente luna:
> Junctæque Nymphis Gratiæ decentes
> Alterno terram quatiunt pede". . . .

is he here also speaking of a holy religious dance? I am wasting too many words upon such a trifle.

function. They fed themselves, therefore, upon the spirit of the poet; they filled their imagination with his most exalted features; the flame of his enthusiasm enkindled their own; they saw and felt as he; and so their works bore the stamp of Homer, not as a portrait that of its original, but as a son that of his father; alike, but different. The similarity often lies but in one single feature. For the rest have nothing in common, except that in the one, as well as in the other, they harmonize with that one resembling feature.

Besides, since the Homeric masterpieces of poetry were older than any masterpieces of art; since Homer had contemplated nature with an artistic eye before Pheidias and Apelles, it is no wonder that the artists found various observations especially useful to them already made in Homer, while as yet they had had no time to take them from Nature herself. These they eagerly seized upon in order to imitate Nature through Homer. Pheidias acknowledged that the lines—[5]

ἦ, καὶ κυανέῃσιν ἐπ' ὀφρύσι νεῦσε Κρονίων·
ἀμβρόσιαι δ' ἄρα χαῖται ἐπερρώσαντο ἄνακτος
κρατὸς ἀπ' ἀθανάτοιο· μέγαν δ' ἐλέλιξεν Ὄλυμπον

—served him as a model for his Olympian Jupiter, and that it was only by their help that he succeeded in producing a godlike countenance, "propemodum ex ipso cœlo petitum." If any one takes this to mean nothing more than that the imagination of the artist was fired by the exalted image of the poet, and rendered capable of producing equally elevated representations, he seems to me to overlook that which is most essential, and to content himself with drawing a conclusion altogether general where he has it in his power to draw a particular one on far more satisfactory grounds. As I judge, Pheidias here confessed that in this passage he first remarked how much expression lies in the eyebrows, "quanta pars animi"[6] shows itself in them. Perhaps it also incited him to bestow more labour upon the hair, in order, in some measure, to express what Homer calls ambrosial locks;

[5] Iliad, i. 528. Valerius Maximus, lib. iii. cap. vii. sect. 4.
[6] Pliny, x. 51.

for it is certain that the ancient artists before the time of Pheidias but little understood the language and meaning of the features, and that they had neglected the hair especially. Still, Myron, as Pliny remarks,[7] was censurable in both points; and according to the same authority, Pythagoras Leontinus was the first who distinguished himself by an elegant execution of the hair.[8] What Pheidias learnt from Homer the other artists learnt from the works of Pheidias.

I will quote another example of this kind which has always given me much pleasure. I would recall to my readers the observations which Hogarth has made upon the Apollo Belvedere:[9] "These two masterpieces of art, the Apollo and Antinous, are seen together in the same palace at Rome, where the Antinous fills the spectator with admiration only, whilst the Apollo strikes him with surprise, and, as travellers express themselves, with an appearance of something *more than human;* which they *of course* are always at a loss to describe; and this effect, they say, is the more astonishing, as upon examination its disproportion is evident even to a common eye. One of the best sculptors we have in England, who lately went to see them, confirmed to me what has been now said, particularly as to the legs and thighs being too long and too large for the upper parts. And Andrea Sacchi, one of the great Italian painters, seems to have been of the same opinion, or he would hardly have given his Apollo, crowning Pasquilini the musician, the exact proportion of the Antinous (in a famous picture of his now in England), as otherwise it seems to be a direct copy from the Apollo.

"Although in very great works we often see an inferior part neglected, yet here it cannot be the case, because in a fine statue just proportion is one of its essential beauties; therefore it stands to reason that these limbs

[7] Plinius, lib. xxxiv. sect. 19, 3: "Ipse tamen corporum tenus curiosus, animi sensus non expressisse videtur, capillum quoque et pubem non emendatius fecisse, quam rudis antiquitas instituisset."

[8] *Ibid.* 19, 4: "Hic primus nervos et venas expressit; capillumque diligentius."

[9] Hogarth's Analysis of Beauty, chap. xi.

must have been lengthened on purpose, otherwise it might easily have been avoided.

"So that if we examine the beauties of this figure thoroughly we may reasonably conclude that what has been hitherto thought so unaccountably excellent in its general appearance hath been owing to what hath seemed a *blemish* in a part of it." All this is very evident; and already Homer, I may add, had felt and indicated that there is an exalted appearance, which springs merely from this addition of size in the proportions of the feet and thighs; for when Antenor compares the form of Ulysses with that of Menelaus he is made to say [10]—

> Στάντων μὲν, Μενέλαος ὑπείρεχεν εὐρέας ὤμους,
> ἄμφω δ' ἑζομένω, γεραρώτερος ἦεν Ὀδυσσεύς.

"When both stood, Menelaus towered above the other with his broad shoulders; but when both sat, Ulysses had the nobler presence." Since Ulysses, therefore, gained when sitting what Menelaus lost in that position, it is easy to determine what proportion the upper parts of each bore to their feet and thighs. The former were of a disproportionate size in Ulysses, the latter in Menelaus.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A SINGLE unbecoming part may disturb the harmonious operation of many in the direction of beauty without the object necessarily becoming ugly. Even ugliness requires several unbecoming parts, all of which we must be able to take in at the same view before we experience sensations the opposite of those which beauty produces.

According to this, therefore, ugliness in its essence could be no subject of poetry; yet Homer has painted extreme ugliness in Thersites, and this ugliness is described according to its contiguous parts. Why in the case of ugliness did he allow himself a licence from which he had so judiciously abstained in that of beauty? Is

[10] Iliad, iii. 210.

not the effect of ugliness obviated by a successive enumeration of its elements just as much as the effect of beauty is annihilated by a similar enumeration of its elements?

Undoubtedly it is; but it is in this very fact that the justification of Homer lies. The poet can only make use of ugliness so far as it is reduced in his description into a less repugnant appearance of bodily imperfection, and ceases, as it were, in point of its effect to be ugliness. Thus, what he cannot make use of by itself he can as an ingredient for the purpose of producing and strengthening certain mixed sensations with which he must entertain us in default of those purely agreeable.

These mixed feelings are the ridiculous and the horrible.

Homer makes Thersites ugly in order to make him ridiculous. He is not made so, however, merely by his ugliness, for ugliness is an imperfection, and a contrast of perfections with imperfections is required to produce the ridiculous. This is the explanation of my friend,[1] to which I might add, that this contrast must not be too sharp and glaring, and that the contrasts, to continue in the language of the artist, must be of such a kind that they are capable of blending into one another. The wise and virtuous Æsop does not become ridiculous because the ugliness of Thersites has been attributed to him. It was a foolish monkish whim to try to illustrate the γελοῖον in his instructive fables by means of the deformity in his own person. For a misshapen body and a beautiful mind are as oil and vinegar; however much you may shake them together, they always remain distinct to the taste. They will not make a third quality. The body produces annoyance, the soul pleasure; each its own effect. It is only when the deformed body is also fragile and sickly, when it impedes the soul in its operations, and is the occasion of prejudicial judgments concerning it, that annoyance and pleasure melt into one another. The new result is not ridicule, but sympathy; and its object, who without this would only have been esteemed, becomes interesting. The misshapen sickly Pope must have been far more interesting

[1] Philos. Schriften des Herrn Moses Mendelssohn, vol. ii. p. 23. [Lessing formed an intimate friendship with Moses Mendelssohn in Berlin.—Ed.]

to his friends than the handsome and healthy Wycherly to his. But while Thersites is not made ridiculous by mere ugliness, he would by no means be so without it. His ugliness, the harmony of this ugliness with his character, the contrast which both form with the idea which he cherishes of his own importance, the harmless effect of his malicious chattering, which is derogatory to himself only, all combine to produce this result. The last circumstance is the *οὐ φθαρτικόν*,[2] which Aristotle considers indispensable to the ridiculous; as my friend makes it also a necessary condition that the contrast should not be of great importance, or inspire us with much interest. For let us only assume that even Thersites paid more dearly than he did for his malicious depreciation of Agamemnon, and atoned for it with his life, instead of a pair of bloody wheals, and we should at once cease to laugh at him. For this horror of a man is still a man, whose annihilation must always appear a greater evil to us than all his defects and vices. In order to experience this, let any one read the account of his end in Quintus Calaber.[3] Achilles is grieved at having slain Penthesileia; the beauty, bathed in her own blood so bravely shed, demands the esteem and compassion of the hero; and esteem and compassion beget love. But the slanderous Thersites imputes this to him as a crime. He grows zealous against the lust which can lead even the most noble of men to madness:—

ἦτ' ἄφρονα φωτὰ τίθησι
καὶ πινυτὸν περ ἐόντα.

Achilles is angered, and, without adding a word, strikes him so heavily between the cheek and the ear that his teeth and blood and life issue together from his mouth. It is too horrible! The passionate and murderous Achilles becomes more hateful to me than the malicious and snarling Thersites. The shout of applause which the Greeks raised at this offends me. I step to the side of Diomedes, who already draws his sword to avenge his kinsman on the murderer, for I feel that Thersites is my kinsman also, a human being.

[2] De Poetica, cap. v. [3] Paralipomena, lib. i. 720.

But let us suppose that the instigations of Thersites had resulted in a mutiny; that the rebellious people had really embarked in their ships, and treacherously left their leaders behind them; that these leaders had fallen into the hands of a revengeful enemy; and that thereupon a divine decree of punishment had wreaked utter destruction on the fleet and people. How would the ugliness of Thersites appear then? If ugliness, when harmless, may be ridiculous, when hurtful it is always horrible. I do not know how I can better illustrate this than by citing a couple of excellent passages from Shakespeare. Edmund, the bastard of the Earl of Gloucester, in King Lear, is no less a villain than Richard Duke of Gloucester, who paved his path to the throne by the most horrible crimes, and mounted it under the title of Richard the Third. How is it then that the first excites our loathing and horror so much less than the second? When I hear the bastard say:—[4]

"Thou, Nature, art my goddess; to thy law
My services are bound. Wherefore should I
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit
The curiosity of nations to deprive me,
For that I am some twelve or fourteen moonshines
Lag of a brother? Why bastard? wherefore base?
When my dimensions are as well compact,
My mind as generous, and my shape as true
As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us
With base? with baseness? bastardy? base, base?
Who, in the lusty stealth of nature, take
More composition and fierce quality
Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed,
Go to the creating a whole tribe of fops,
Got 'tween asleep and awake?"

I am listening to a devil, but see him in the form of an angel of light. When, on the contrary, I hear the Duke of Gloucester:—[5]

"But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;

[4] King Lear, Act i. sc. 2.
[5] King Richard the Third, Act i. sc. 1.

I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty;
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph;
I, that am curtailed of this fair proportion,
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
Deformed, unfinished, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
And that so lamely and unfashionable,
That dogs bark at me as I halt by them;
Why I, in this weak piping time of peace,
Have no delight to pass away the time,
Unless to spy my shadow in the sun
And descant on mine own deformity;
And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,
To entertain these fair, well-spoken days,
I am determined to prove a villain——"

I hear a devil, and I see a devil; and in a form which the devil alone ought to have.

CHAPTER XXIV.

It is thus that the poet turns ugliness of form to account. What use may the artist be allowed to make of it?

Painting, as an imitative power, can express ugliness; but painting as a fine art refuses to do so: as in the former capacity, all visible objects may be subjects for it, in the latter it is confined to those only by which pleasing sensations are awakened.

But do not even disagreeable sensations become pleasing when imitated? Not all. An acute critic[1] has already made the following remarks upon aversion: "The representations," he says, "of fear, sorrow, alarm, compassion, &c., can only so far awaken dislike as we believe the evil to be real. These therefore might, through the recollection that it is nothing but an artificial illusion, dissolve into sensations of pleasure. But the disagreeable sensation of disgust follows, on the mere representation in the soul, by virtue of the law of our imagination, whether the

[1] Briefe die neueste Lit. betreffend, vol. v. p. 102.

object be considered real or not. What consolation is it to the offended mind, even if the artificiality of the imitation is ever so obvious? Its aversion arose, not from the presumption that the evil was real, but from the mere representation of it, and that is real. The feelings of disgust, therefore, are always real, and never imitations.

All this is equally applicable to ugliness of form. This ugliness offends our sight, contradicts our taste for arrangement and harmony, and awakens disgust, without any reference to the actual existence of the object in which we perceive it. We had rather not see Thersites either in nature or in a picture; and if the picture should be the least displeasing of the two, this does not result from the ugliness of his form ceasing to be such an imitation, but from our possessing the power of withdrawing attention from this ugliness, and deriving pleasure exclusively from the art of the painter. But even this pleasure will every moment be interrupted by the reflexion to what a bad purpose the art has been applied, and this reflexion seldom fails to convey with it disparagement of the artist.

Aristotle adduces another reason[2] why objects which we view with displeasure in nature may impart enjoyment, even when most faithfully represented, viz. the general thirst for knowledge among men. We are pleased when we can learn from the imitation, τί ἕκαστον, what each thing is, or when we can conclude from it ὅτι οὗτος ἐκεῖνος, that it represents this thing or that, but no inference can be drawn from this in favour of ugliness in the imitation. The pleasure which arises from the satisfaction of our thirst for knowledge is momentary, and merely accidental to the object which affords it, while the feeling of annoyance which accompanies the sight of ugliness is permanent, and essential to the object which awakens it. How then can this latter be counterbalanced by the former? Still less can the trifling degree of pleasurable interest afforded by the similitude overcome the displeasing effect of the ugliness. The more closely I compare the ugly picture with the ugly original, the more I expose myself to this effect, so that the pleasure of comparison presently

[2] De Poetica, cap. iv.

vanishes, and nothing remains to me but the disagreeable impression of the double ugliness. To judge from the examples which Aristotle gives us, it appears that he had no intention of classing simple ugliness of form among those displeasing objects which are capable of affording pleasure when imitated. These examples are wild beasts and corpses. Wild beasts awaken terror, although they are not ugly, and it is this terror, and not their ugliness, which by imitation is resolved into pleasurable sensations. So too it is with corpses. It is the acuter feelings of pity and the terrible thought of our own annihilation that renders a corpse a repulsive object to us in nature; but in the imitation this pity loses its poignancy through our consciousness of illusion, and an addition of soothing circumstances may either entirely withdraw our thoughts from this fatal recollection, or unite itself so inseparably with it that we believe we can see therein more to desire than to shrink from.

Ugliness of form, then, cannot in and for itself be a subject for painting as a fine art, for the sensation which it excites is not only displeasing, but is not even of that class of unpleasing sensations which, when imitated, are changed into the pleasurable. Still it remains a question whether, as an ingredient for strengthening sensations, it may not be serviceable to art as well as to poetry?

May painting, to attain the ridiculous and the horrible, make use of ugly forms?

I will not venture to answer directly in the negative. It is undeniable that harmless ugliness can be made ridiculous in painting also, especially if an affected assumption of charm and beauty is combined with it, but it is just as indisputable that harmful ugliness excites the same horror in painting as in nature, and that the ridiculous and the horrible, both of which are in themselves mixed sensations, attain by imitation, the former a higher degree of attraction, the latter of offensiveness.

I must, however, call attention to the fact that in spite of this, painting and poetry do not stand in precisely the same position. In poetry, as I observed, ugliness of form, through its parts being changed from coexisting into successive, almost entirely loses its repulsive effect; from

this point of view, it ceases as it were to be ugliness, and can therefore the more implicitly combine with other appearances to produce a new and peculiar effect. In painting, on the contrary, the ugliness exerts all its powers at once, and affects us but little less deeply than in nature. Harmless ugliness, consequently, cannot long remain ridiculous; the unpleasant sensation gains the upper hand, and what at first was comic becomes in the course of time simply repulsive. It is just the same with hurtful ugliness; the horrible disappears by degrees, and deformity is left behind alone and unchangeable.

On these considerations Count Caylus was perfectly right in omitting the episode of Thersites in his series of Homeric paintings, but are we therefore justified in wishing that it had been left out of Homer itself? I am sorry to find that a scholar of otherwise just and refined taste is of this opinion,[3] but I reserve for another opportunity the fuller explanation of my views upon this point.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE second distinction, which the critic I have just quoted draws between disgust and the other disagreeable passions of the soul, is also shown by the displeasure which ugliness of form excites in us.

"Other disagreeable passions," he says,[1] "may, even in nature, setting aside imitation, find frequent opportunities of flattering the mind: because they never excite pure aversion, but always temper their bitterness with gratification. Our fear is seldom deprived of all hope. Terror animates all our powers, to escape from the danger: anger is commingled with the desire of revenge, and sorrow with the soothing recollection of former happiness; while compassion is inseparable from the tender feelings of love and affection. The soul has the liberty of dwelling at one time upon the pleasing, at another upon the repulsive, parts of a passion, and of creating for itself a mixture of

[3] Klotzii Epistolæ Homericæ, p. 33. [1] *Ibid.* p. 103.

pleasure and sorrow which is far more seductive than the purest gratification. It requires but little attention to the workings of our own mind to have observed this times without number. Whence comes it else, that to the angry man his anger, and to the sorrowing his sorrow, are dearer than all the cheerful representations with which we think to calm him? But it is very different in the case of disgust and the feelings allied to it. In these the soul recognizes no admixture of pleasure. Dissatisfaction gains the upper hand, and it is impossible to think of any situation, either in nature or in imitation, in which the mind would not shrink with abhorrence from representations of them."

Perfectly true; but since the critic himself acknowledges that there are sensations allied to disgust, which likewise can produce nothing but annoyance; what, I ask, can be more closely allied to it than the perception of ugliness in form? This too in nature is without the smallest admixture of pleasure; and since it is equally incapable of admitting any through imitation, it is likewise impossible to conceive any condition of it in which the mind would not shrink from it with abhorrence.

This repugnance, if I have investigated my own feelings with sufficient care, is altogether of the nature of disgust. The sensation which is excited by ugliness of form is disgust, only in a lower degree. This, I allow, is at variance with another remark of the critic, from which it would appear that he considers that only the less acute of our senses, taste, smell, and touch, are exposed to disgust. "The two first," he says, "through an excessive sweetness; and the last through the oversoftness of any matter which does not afford sufficient resistance to the nerves which touch it. These objects then become intolerable to the sight also, but only through the association of ideas, and our recollection of the repugnance which our taste, smell, and feeling experienced at them; for, strictly speaking, there is no such thing as an object of disgust to the sight." Still it appears to me that instances of this last might be named. A liver spot in the face, a hare-lip, a flattened nose with prominent nostrils, an entire want of eyebrows, are uglinesses which are repugnant neither to the smell nor taste nor touch, yet

it is certain that there is a sensation experienced at them which approaches much more closely to disgust than any which is produced by other deformities of body, such as a crooked foot or a high shoulder; and the more delicate the temperament, the more will those sensations which precede nausea be felt at the sight of them; these, however, quickly subside, and it is rarely that actual nausea follows; the reason for which may certainly be found in this, that, being objects of sight, sight perceives in them and with them a number of realities, through the agreeable representations of which the disagreeable ones are so weakened and obscured that they can rarely produce any traceable influence upon the body. Our less acute senses, on the contrary, the taste, smell, and touch, cannot observe such realities, whilst they are affected with what is repulsive; this, consequently, is left to work alone, and in its full strength, and is naturally therefore accompanied by a far more violent bodily effect.

Besides, the disgusting stands on just the same footing as to imitation as the ugly. Nay, since its unpleasant effects are more violent, it is still less capable than the latter of becoming, in and by itself, a subject either of poetry or painting. Only because it is greatly softened by being expressed in words should I venture to assert that the poet can employ at least a few disgusting traits as an ingredient to produce the same mixed sensations which he so successfully strengthens by the use of ugliness.

The disgusting can increase the ridiculous; or representations of propriety and dignity may be rendered laughable by being placed in close contrast with it. Numerous examples of this may be found in Aristophanes. One that occurs to me is the weasel, which interrupted the good Sokrates in his astronomical contemplations.[2]

ΜΑΘ. *πρώην δέ γε γνώμην μεγάλην ἀφῃρέθη*
ὑπ' ἀσκαλαβώτου. ΣΤΡ. *τίνα τρόπον; κάτειπέ μοι*
ΜΑΘ. *ζητοῦντος αὐτοῦ τῆς σελήνης τὰς ὁδοὺς*
καὶ τὰς περιφοράς, εἶτ' ἄνω κεχηνότος
ἀπὸ τῆς ὀροφῆς νύκτωρ γαλεώτης κατέχεσεν.
ΣΤΡ. *ἥσθην γαλεώτῃ καταχέσαντι Σωκράτους.*

[2] Nubes, 170.

If we suppose that what fell into his open mouth was not disgusting, the ridiculous disappears altogether. The most comic traits of this kind are to be found in the Hottentot history of Tquassouw and Knonmquaiha, which appeared in the 'Connoisseur,' an English weekly periodical, abounding in humour, ascribed to Lord Chesterfield. We all know how dirty the Hottentots are, and how many things are esteemed beautiful, becoming, and holy among them which excite disgust and loathing in us. Let us picture to ourselves the cartilage of the nose flattened, breasts flaccidly descending to the navel, the whole body glistening in the sun with an ointment of goat's fat and soot, the hair dripping with grease, the feet and arms entwined with fresh entrails. Let us think of all this as the object of a fervent, venerating, tender love; let us hear the passion expressed in the noble language of seriousness and admiration, and refrain from laughing if we can.[3]

With the terrible the disgusting seems capable of being

[3] The Connoisseur, vol. i. No. 21. It is entitled "A description of the beauty of Knonmquaiha." "He was struck with the glossy hue of her complexion, which shone like the jetty down on the black hogs of Hessaqua; he was ravished with the prest gristle of her nose; and his eyes dwelt with admiration on the flaccid beauties of her breasts, which descended to her navel." And what does art contribute to set so much beauty in its most advantageous light? "She made a varnish of the fat of goats mixed with soot, with which she anointed her whole body, as she stood beneath the rays of the sun; her locks were clotted with melted grease, and powdered with the yellow dust of Buchu: her face, which shone like the polished ebony, was beautifully varied with spots of red earth, and appeared like the sable curtain of the night bespangled with stars: she sprinkled her limbs with wood-ashes, and perfumed them with the dung of Stinkbingsem. Her arms and legs were entwined with the shining entrails of an heifer: from her neck there hung a pouch composed of the stomach of a kid: the wings of an ostrich overshadowed the fleshy promontories behind, and before she wore an apron formed of the shaggy ears of a lion." I will add the ceremony of the nuptials of the enamoured pair. "The Surri, or chief priest, approached them, and in a deep voice chanted the nuptial rites to the melodious grumbling of the gom-gom, and at the same time (according to the manner of Caffraria) bedewed them plentifully with the urinary benediction. The bride and bridegroom rubbed in the precious stream with ecstasy, while the briny drops trickled from their bodies, like the oozy surge from the rocks of Chirigriqua."

associated more closely still. What we call the horrible is nothing more than the terrible rendered disgusting. Longinus[4] indeed is offended with the Τῆς ἐκ μὲν ῥινῶν μύξαι ῥέον in Hesiod's[5] picture of Sorrow; not so much, I think, because it is a disgusting trait as because it is one simply so, and does not in any way contribute to the terrible; for he appears to raise no objections against the long nails, projecting beyond the fingers (μακροὶ δ' ὄνυχες χείρεσσιν ὑπῆσαν): and yet long nails are at least as disgusting as a dirty nose; but they are also terrible; for it is they which tear the cheeks, till the blood streams from them to the ground:—

. ἐκ δὲ παρειῶν
αἷμ' ἀπελείβετ' ἔραζε . . .

On the other hand a dirty nose is nothing but a dirty nose, and I can only recommend Sorrow to keep her mouth shut. Let the reader turn to the description of the desolate cave of the unfortunate Philoktetes in Sophokles. None of the necessaries and conveniences of life are to be seen, except a bed of trampled dry leaves, a shapeless wooden bowl, and the means of lighting a fire, the whole wealth of the sick and deserted man. How does the poet complete this sorrowful and fearful picture? He adds a touch of disgust.[6] "Ha!" and Neoptolemus all at once shrinks; "look at these torn rags full of blood and matter drying here."

ΝΕ. ὁρῶ κενὴν οἴκησιν ἀνθρώπων δίχα.
ΟΔ. οὐδ' ἔνδον οἰκοποιός ἐστί τις τροφή;
ΝΕ. στειπτή γε φυλλὰς ὡς ἐναυλίζοντί τῳ.
ΟΔ. τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ἔρημα, κοὐδέν ἐσθ' ὑπόστεγον;
ΝΕ. αὐτόξυλόν γ' ἔκπωμα, φαυλουργοῦ τινος
τεχνήματ' ἀνδρὸς, καὶ πυρεῖ' ὁμοῦ τάδε.
ΟΔ. κείνου τὸ θησαύρισμα σημαίνεις τόδε·
ΝΕ. ἰοὺ! ἰού! καὶ ταῦτά γ' ἄλλα θάλπεται
ῥάκη, βαρείας του νοσηλείας πλέα.

[4] Περὶ Ὕψους, τμῆμα η'. p. 15. Edit. T. Fabri.
[5] Scut. Hercul. 266.
[6] Philoct. 31.

So too in Homer: Hektor, when dragged along, his face disfigured with blood and dust, and his hair matted—

"Squalentem barbam et concretos sanguine crines"

(as Virgil expresses it),[7] becomes a disgusting object, but for that very reason more horrible and moving. Who can think of the punishment of Marsyas, in Ovid, without a sensation of disgust?[8]

"Clamanti cutis est summos direpta per artus:
Nec quidquam nisi vulnus erat; cruor undique manat:
Detectique patent nervi: trepidæque sine ulla
Pelle micant venæ: salientia viscera possis
Et perlucentes numerare in pectore fibras."

We all feel, however, that the disgusting is here in its proper place. It renders the terrible horrible; and the horrible is not altogether displeasing even in nature, if our compassion is thereby interested: how much less then in imitation? I will not multiply instances; yet I must observe that there is one species of the horrible to which the poet has hardly any other means of access than the disgusting. It is the horrors of hunger. Even in common life we can only express the direst stress of starvation by an enumeration of all the innutritious, unwholesome, and particularly disgusting things with which the stomach must needs be satisfied; since imitation cannot excite in us any actual sensation of hunger, it has recourse to another unpleasant feeling, which, in the case of extreme starvation we recognize as the lighter evil. This sensation it seeks to awaken in us, that we may conclude, from our aversion to it, how strong that aversion must be, under the influence of which we would be glad to set at naught the present one. Ovid says of the Oread whom Ceres sent to meet Famine[9]—

"Hanc (Famem) procul ut vidit . . .
. refert mandata deæ; paulumque morata,
Quanquam aberat longe, quanquam modo venerat illuc,
Visa tamen sensisse famem."

[7] Æneid, lib. ii. 277. [8] Metamorph. vi. 397.
[9] *Ibid.* viii. 809.

This is an unnatural exaggeration. The sight of a famishing person, even though it be Famine herself, does not possess this infectious power; pity and horror and disgust it might awaken, but not hunger. Ovid has not been sparing of this horror in his picture of Fames; and in his description of Erysichthon's starvation, as well as in that of Kallimachus,[10] the disgusting traits are the strongest. After Erysichthon has consumed everything, and has not spared even the sacrificial cow which his mother had reared for Vesta, Kallimachus represents him as falling upon the horses and cats, and begging in the streets for the fragments and filthy relics from strangers' tables:—

> καὶ τὰν βῶν ἔφαγεν, τὰν Ἑστίᾳ ἔτρεφε μάτηρ,
> καὶ τὸν ἀεθλοφόρον καὶ τὸν πολεμήιον ἵππον,
> καὶ τὰν αἴλουρον, τὰν ἔτρεμε θήρια μικκά—
> καὶ τόθ' ὁ τῶ βασιλῆος ἔνι τριόδοισι καθῆστο
> αἰτίζων ἀκόλως τε καὶ ἔκβολα λύματα δαιτός.

And Ovid makes him at last fix his teeth in his own limbs, that from his own body he might obtain nourishment for itself:—

> "Vis tamen illa mali postquam consumpserat omnem
> Materiam
> Ipse suos artus lacero divellere morsu
> Cœpit; et infelix minuendo corpus alebat."

The only reason that the harpies were represented as so noisome and disgusting was that the hunger caused by their carrying off the provisions might appear more horrible. Let us listen to the complaint of Phineus, in Apollonius:—[11]

> τυτθὸν δ' ἦν ἄρα δή ποτ' ἐδητύος ἄμμι λίπωσι,
> πνεῖ τόδε μυδαλέον τε καὶ οὐ τλητὸν μένος ὀδμῆς.
> οὔ κέ τις οὐδὲ μίνυνθα βρότων ἄνσχοιτο πελάσσας,
> οὐδ' εἰ οἱ ἀδάμαντος ἐληλαμένον κέαρ εἴη.
> ἀλλά με πικρὴ δῆτά κε δαιτὸς ἐπίσχει ἀνάγκη
> μίμνειν, καὶ μίμνοντα κακῇ ἐν γαστέρι θέσθαι.

[10] Hym. in Cererem, 111. [11] Argonaut. lib. ii. 228.

I should be glad to justify from this point of view the disgusting introduction of the harpies in Virgil; but the hunger there spoken of is not an actual and present famine which they occasion, but only an impending one which they foretell; and, to crown all, the whole prophesy finds its fulfilment in a mere verbal equivocation. Dante, too, not only prepares us for the story of the starvation of Ugolino, by placing him and his former persecutors in the most loathsome and horrible situation in hell; but also the account of the starvation itself is not without some features awakening disgust, which especially seizes us when the sons offer themselves to their father as food. In the note I quote a passage from a play of Beaumont and Fletcher, which might have served instead of all other examples, did I not feel obliged to acknowledge that it is somewhat exaggerated.[12]

[12] The Sea Voyage, Act iii. sc. 1. [It is by Fletcher only. Ed.] A French pirate is driven with his ship upon a desert island. Avarice and envy produce a quarrel among his crew. This affords a few poor creatures who had been exposed for some time to the utmost distress upon the island an opportunity of putting out to sea in the vessel. The other wretches are thus suddenly deprived of all the necessities of life, and have no prospect before them but a cruel death. One of them expresses his hunger and despair to his fellow as follows:—

"Lamure. Oh, what a tempest have I in my stomach!
How my empty guts cry out! My wounds ache,
Would they would bleed again, that I might get
Something to quench my thirst.
Franville. O Lamure, the happiness my dogs had
When I kept house at home! They had a storehouse,
A storehouse of most blessed bones and crusts,
Happy crusts. Oh, how sharp hunger pinches me! . . .
Lamure. How now, what news?
Morillar. Hast any meat yet?
Franville. Not a bit that I can see;
Here be goodly quarries, but they be cruel hard
To gnaw:
I ha' got some mud, it we will eat with spoons,
Very good thick mud; but it stinks damnably;
There's old rotten trunks of trees too,
But not a leaf nor blossom in all the island
Lamure. How it looks!
Morillar. It stiuks too.
Lamure. It may be poison.

I now come to disgusting objects in painting. Even if it were altogether indisputable that there is strictly speaking no such thing as an object disgusting to the sight which, as a matter of course, painting, as a fine art, would renounce, it would still be compelled altogether to avoid disgusting objects, because the association of ideas renders them disgusting to the sight also. Pordenone, in

FRANVILLE. Let it be anything,
So I can get it down. Why man,
Poison's a princely dish.
MORILLAR. Hast thou no bisket?
No crumbs left in thy pocket? Here is my doublet,
Give me but three small crumbs.
FRANVILLE. Not for three kingdoms,
If I were master of 'em. O Lamure,
But one poor joint of mutton we ha' scorned, man.
LAMURE. Thou speak'st of Paradise;
Or but the snuffs of those healths
We have lewdly at midnight flung away.
MORILLAR. Ah! but to lick the glasses."

But this is nothing to the next scene, when the ship's surgeon enters.

"FRANVILLE. Here comes the surgeon. What hast thou discovered?
Smile, smile, and comfort us.
SURGEON. I am expiring,
Smile they that can. I can find nothing, gentlemen;
Here's nothing can be meat, without a miracle.
Oh that I had my boxes and my lints now,
My stupes, my tents, and those sweet helps of nature,
What dainty dishes could I make of 'em.
MORILLAR. Hast ne'er an old suppository?
SURGEON. Oh, would I had, sir.
LAMURE. Or but the paper where such a cordial,
Potion, or pills, hath been entomb'd?
FRANVILLE. Or the blest bladder, where a cooling-glister—
MORILLAR. Hast thou no searcloths left? Nor any old poultice?
FRANVILLE. We care not to what it hath been ministered.
SURGEON. Sure I have none of these dainties, gentlemen.
FRANVILLE. Where's the great wen
Thou cut'st from Hugh the sailor's shoulder?
That would serve now for a most princely banquet.
SURGEON. Ay, if we had it, gentlemen.
I flung it overboard, slave that I was.
LAMURE. A most improvident villain."

a painting of the burial of Christ, represents one of the bystanders as compressing his nose. Richardson[13] disapproves of this upon the ground that Christ had not yet been dead long enough for his body to have passed into corruption. At the resurrection of Lazarus, on the contrary, he is of opinion that an artist might be permitted to draw some of the spectators in this attitude, because history expressly affirms that his body already stank. To me such a representation would there also be intolerable, because it is not only actual stench, but the very idea of it, that awakens disgust. We avoid stinking places even if we have a cold in the head. But, it will be replied, painting requires the disgusting, not for its own sake, but as poetry, to strengthen thereby the ridiculous and the horrible. At its peril! But what I have remarked of the ugly, in respect to this, holds good so much the more of the disgusting. It loses incomparably less of its effect in an imitation which appeals to the eyes than in one which appeals to the ears. In the former, therefore, it cannot become so closely mixed up with the constituent parts of the ridiculous and the horrible as in the latter; as soon as our first surprise is over, and our first eager look satisfied, it again becomes altogether distinct, and stands before us in its original crude form.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Herr Winckelmann's 'History of Ancient Art' has appeared, and I cannot venture a step further before I have read it. To subtilize upon art merely from general ideas may lead us astray into whimsical theories, which sooner or later we find, to our shame, are contradicted in the works of art. The ancients also well knew the ties by which painting and poetry are bound together, and it will be found that they have never drawn them more tightly than was advantageous for each. What their artists did will teach me what artists generally should do, and

[13] Richardson, De la Peinture, t. i. p. 74.

where such a man as Winckelmann bears the torch of history before, speculation can confidently follow.

People generally dip into an important work before they commence seriously reading it. My chief curiosity was to learn the opinion of the author upon the Laokoon, not upon the art displayed in its execution, for with regard to that he has already explained himself elsewhere; but upon its antiquity. Whose side does he take? Theirs, to whom Virgil appears to have had the group before his eyes? or theirs who believe that the artists worked after the poet?

My taste is much gratified to find that he makes not the least mention of imitation having taken place either on the one side or the other. Where is the absolute necessity for it? It is not, after all, impossible that the similarities between the poetical description and the work of art, to which I have called attention above, may be accidental, and not designed, similarities; and that, so far from one having served as the model of the other, the two need not even have been executed after the same? Yet had he been prejudiced by the appearance of such imitation, he must have declared himself in favour of the former supposition; for he assumes that the Laokoon is the production of an age when art among the Greeks had reached the highest summit of its perfection, *i.e.* the age of Alexander the Great.

"That good destiny," he says,[1] "which watched over art, even at its destruction, has preserved for the admiration of the whole world a work of this period of art as a proof of the reality of that excellence ascribed by history to the numberless masterpieces that have disappeared. Laokoon, together with his two sons, executed by Agesander, Apollodorus,[2] and Athenodorus, of Rhodes, belongs in all probability to this time; although it is impossible to determine its age precisely, or to give, as

[1] Geschichte der Kunst, p. 347.

[2] Not Apollodorus, but Polydorus. Pliny is the only author who mentions these artists, and I do not know that there is any difference in the manuscripts, as regards this name. Had it been so, Hardouin would certainly have noticed it. *Polydorus* too is the reading in all the old editions. Winckelmann must merely have committed a trifling error in transcription.

some have done, the exact Olympiad in which these artists flourished."

In a note he adds: "Pliny does not mention the age in which Agesander and his assistants in his work lived; but Maffei, in his explanation of ancient statues, takes it for certain that these artists flourished in the 88th Olympiad; and Richardson and others have copied this statement, on his authority. The former has, I think, mistaken an Athenodorus among the pupils of Polykletus for one of the artists in question, and, since Polykletus flourished in the eighty-seventh, he has placed his assumed scholar an Olympiad later: Maffei could have had no other grounds."

He certainly could not have had any other. But why is Winckelmann satisfied with merely quoting this supposed reason of Maffei? Does it contradict itself? Not entirely. Although it is corroborated by no other evidence, yet it makes for itself a slight amount of probability, unless there is some evidence to prove that it is impossible that Athenodorus, the pupil of Polykletus, and Athenodorus, the associate of Agesander, can have been one and the same person. Fortunately this can be shown, and that too by their different countries. The first Athenodorus came, according to the express testimony of Pausanias,[3] from Kleitor in Arcadia; while the second, on the authority of Pliny, was a native of Rhodes.

Winckelmann can have had no object for wishing that Maffei's assumption should not be incontrovertibly disproved by the production of this circumstance. It must rather be that the grounds which, with his undeniable insight, he derives from the art displayed in the work, have appeared to him of such importance that it matters little whether the opinion of Maffei still retains some probability or not. He recognises without doubt in the Laokoon too many of those "argutiæ"[4] which were peculiar to Lysippus, and with which he was the first to enrich art, to conceive it possible that it should be the production of an age preceding his.

[3] Ἀθηνοδῶρος δὲ καὶ Δαμίας . . . οὗτοι δὲ Ἀρκάδες εἰσὶν ἐκ Κλειτόρος. Phoc. cap. ix. p. 819, edit. Kühn.

[4] Plinius, lib. xxxiv. sect. 19, 6.

But supposing it proved that the Laokoon cannot be of greater antiquity than the age of Lysippus, does it necessarily follow that it must belong to about that period, or that it is impossible it should be the work of a far later age? To pass over the time preceding the establishment of the Roman monarchy, during which art in Greece now lifted and now drooped its head, why may not the Laokoon have been the happy fruit of that rivalry which the lavish magnificence of the first Cæsars must have enkindled among the artists? Why cannot Agesander and his helpmates have been contemporaries of a Strongylion, an Archesilaus, a Pasiteles, a Posidonius, or a Diogenes? Were not some of the works of these masters also valued as highly as any that art had ever produced? Let us suppose that pieces, unquestionably theirs, were still extant, but that the age of their sculptors was unknown, and could only be inferred from their style of art; would not an inspiration almost divine be required to guard the critic against a belief that he ought to attribute them also to that age which alone Winckelmann deems capable of having produced the Laokoon?

It is true that Pliny does not expressly state the time at which the artists of the Laokoon flourished. Still, if I were to draw any inference from the connexion of the whole passage, as to whether he intended to rank them among the ancient or modern artists, I confess that the probability seems to me to be in favour of the latter supposition; but let the reader judge for himself.

After Pliny has spoken, somewhat at length, of the most ancient and greatest masters in sculpture, Pheidias, Praxiteles, and Skopas; and has afterwards given, without any chronological order, the names of the rest, and especially of those, any of whose works were still extant at Rome, he continues as follows:[5] "Nec multo plurium fama est, quorundam claritati in operibus eximiis obstante numero artificum, quoniam nec unus occupat gloriam, nec plures pariter nuncupari possunt, sicut in Laocoonte, qui est in Titi imperatoris domo, opus omnibus et picturæ et

[5] Lib. xxxvi. 4, 11

statuariæ artis præponendum. Ex uno lapide eum et liberos draconumque mirabiles nexus de consilii sententia fecere summi artifices, Agesander et Polydorus et Athenodorus Rhodii. *Similiter* Palatinas domus Cæsarum replevere probatissimis signis Craterus cum Pythodoro, Polydectes cum Hermolao, Pythodorus alius cum Artemone, et singularis Aphrodisius Trallianus. Agrippæ Pantheum decoravit Diogenes Atheniensis; et Caryatides in columnis templi ejus probantur inter pauca operum: sicut in fastigio posita signa, sed propter altitudinem loci minus celebrata."

Of all the artists mentioned in this passage, Diogenes of Athens is the only one whose era is incontestably determined. He decorated the Pantheon of Agrippa, and must therefore have lived during the reign of Augustus. Still, if we weigh the words of Pliny a little more closely, I think we shall find that the age of Craterus and Pythodorus, of Polydectes and Hermolaus, of the second Pythodorus and Artemon, as well as of Aphrodisius of Tralles, are just as unquestionably settled. He says of them, "Palatinas domus Cæsarum replevere probatissimis signis." Now, I ask, is it possible this should only mean that the palaces of the Cæsars were filled with their masterpieces; in the sense, namely, that the Cæsars had had them collected everywhere, transported to Rome, and placed in their palaces? Certainly not. But they must have executed their statues expressly for these palaces of the Cæsars, and they must have flourished during their time. That they were later artists, whose labours were confined to Italy, may be clearly inferred from the fact that we find no mention of them elsewhere. Had they laboured in Greece in early times, Pausanias would have seen one or other of their works, and have preserved their memory for us. A Pythodorus, to be sure, does occur in him,[6] but Hardouin is quite wrong in taking him for the same as that mentioned in the above-quoted passage of Pliny; for Pausanias calls one of his pieces, a statue of Juno which he saw at Koronæa in Bœotia, ἄγαλμα ἀρχαῖον, an epithet he only applies to the works of those masters who had flourished

[6] Bœotic. cap. xxxiv. p. 778. Edit. Kühn.

in the most ancient and rudest days of art, long before Pheidias and Praxiteles. With works of this kind we may be quite sure the Cæsars did not decorate their palaces. Still less attention can be paid to another conjecture of Hardouin, that Artemon is perhaps the painter of the same name whom Pliny mentions in another place. Identity of names affords but a very poor degree of probability for the sake of which we are far from being entitled to do violence to the natural interpretation of an uncorrupt passage.

According to this there is no doubt that Craterus and Pythodorus, Polydectes and Hermolaus, &c., lived under the Cæsars, whose palaces they filled with their remarkable works, and it seems to me that no other age can be reasonably assigned to those artists from whom Pliny passes on to the others by a "similiter." Now these are the sculptors of the Laokoon. Let my reader only reflect, supposing Agesander, Polydorus, and Athenodorus were as old masters as Winckelmann believes them to be, how unnatural it would appear for an author, in whom accuracy of expression is of considerable importance, when he is forced to pass abruptly from them to the most modern artists to make this transition by means of an "In like manner."

Still it will be answered that this "similiter" does not refer to a connexion in respect of age, but to another circumstance which these artists, so different in point of antiquity, possessed in common. Pliny, it will be said, is speaking of those artists who executed works together, and on account of this association remained less celebrated than they deserved to be. For since no one alone can lay claim to the honour of a work executed in common, and always to mention by name every one who took part in it would have been too tedious ("quoniam nec unus occupat gloriam, nec plures pariter nuncupari possunt"), their united names became neglected. This was the lot of the sculptors of the Laokoon, and of so many other artists whom the Cæsars employed in the decoration of their palaces.

I grant all this; but still even then it is in the highest degree probable that Pliny is speaking only of modern artists who worked in conjunction. For if he were alluding to the more ancient, why did he only mention the

sculptors of the Laokoon? Why not others also? Onatas and Kalliteles? Timokles and Timarchides? or the sons of this Timarchides: there was a Jupiter,[7] the joint production of these last, in Rome. Herr Winckelmann himself says that a long list might be given of ancient works which had more than one father;[8] and would Pliny have only recollected Agesander, Polydorus, and Athenodorus, if he had not expressly confined himself to the latest times?

If the probability of a supposition increases in proportion to the number and difficulty of the incomprehensible circumstances which are explained by it, the assumption that the sculptors of Laokoon flourished under the first Cæsars is in a very high degree confirmed; for if they had laboured in Greece at the period to which Winckelmann attributes them, if the Laokoon itself had formerly been in that country, the silence observed by the Greeks upon such a work ("opere omnibus et picturæ et statuariæ artis præponendo") would be exceedingly strange. It would surprise us that such great masters should have executed nothing else, or that Pausanias had been able to see as little of the rest of their works in Greece as he did of the Laokoon. In Rome, on the contrary, the great masterpiece might long remain in obscurity, and, even if it were executed as early as the time of Augustus, there would be nothing wonderful in Pliny's having been the first and only man to mention it. Let us only call to mind what he says of a Venus by Skopas[9] which stood at Rome in a temple of Mars; . . . "quemcumque alium locum nobilitatura. Romæ quidem magnitudo operum eam obliterat, ac magni officiorum negotiorumque acervi omnes a contemplatione talium abducunt: quoniam otiosorum et in magno loci silentio apta admiratio talis est."

Those who are desirous of recognizing in the group of the Laokoon an imitation of Virgil's description will accept the remarks I have made hitherto with satisfaction. Another conjecture might occur to me which likewise ought not to call forth much disapproval from them. It was very likely, they might think, Asinius Pollio who had Virgil's Laokoon executed by Greek artists. Pollio was a

[7] Plinius, xxxvi. 4, 10. [8] Gesch. der Kunst, vol. ii. p. 331.
[9] Plinius, xxxvi. 4, 8.

particular friend of the poet, outlived him, and appears even to have composed a work of his own upon the Æneid, for where else could the isolated remarks which Servius quotes from him[10] have found a place so easily as in a work of his own upon this poem. At the same time Pollio was an amateur and connoisseur of art, possessed a rich collection of the most excellent antique works of art, and commissioned the artists of his day to execute new ones for him; and so bold a group as the Laokoon was in perfect accordance with the taste which he displayed in his selection:[11] "ut fuit acris vehementiæ sic quoque spectari monumenta sua voluit." Still, as the cabinet of Pollio at the time of Pliny, when the Laokoon stood in the palace of Titus, appears to have been still quite undivided in a place especially allotted to it, this supposition must again lose a good deal of its probability. And, after all, I do not see why Titus himself should not have done what we would ascribe to Pollio.

CHAPTER XXVII.

I AM confirmed in my opinion, that the sculptors of the Laokoon worked under the first Cæsars, or at any rate cannot be of such antiquity as Herr Winckelmann believes, by a small piece of information which he himself is the first to make known. It is this:—[1]

"At Nettuno, formerly Antium, Cardinal Alexander Albani, in the year 1717, discovered in a great vault, which lay covered by the sea, a vase of greyish black marble, now called bigio, in which the group was inlaid; upon it was the following inscription:—

ΑΘΑΝΟΔΩΡΟΣ ΑΓΗΣΑΝΔΡΟΥ
ΡΟΔΙΟΣ ΕΠΟΙΗΣΕ.

'ATHANODORUS THE SON OF AGESANDER, OF RHODES, MADE IT.' We gather from this inscription that father and son

[10] Æneid, lib. ii. v. 7, and more particularly lib. xi. 183. Such a work therefore might safely be added to the catalogue of this man's lost writings.

[11] Plinius, xxxvi. 4, 10.

[1] Gesch. der Kunst, part ii. p. 347.

executed the Laokoon, and probably Apollodorus (Polydorus) was also a son of Agesander; for this Athanodorus can be no other than the one mentioned by Pliny. This inscription further proves that more works of art than three only, as Pliny says, have been found, on which the artists have inscribed the word *made* in the perfect and definite tense; ἐποίησε, fecit: he informs us that all the rest out of modesty expressed it in the indefinite, ἐποίει, faciebat."

Herr Winckelmann will find few to gainsay his assertion that the Athanodorus in this inscription can be no other than the Athenodorus mentioned by Pliny amongst the sculptors of the Laokoon. Athanodorus and Athenodorus are doubtless the same name; for the Rhodians spoke the Doric dialect. But upon the other conclusions which he draws from this inscription I must make a few remarks.

His first inference, that Athenodorus was a son of Agesander, may pass. It is very probable, but not indisputable; for it is well known that there were ancient artists who abandoned the name of their father, and adopted that of their master. What Pliny says of the brothers Apollonius and Tauriscus hardly admits of any other interpretation.[2]

But how! This inscription is to refute the assertion of Pliny, that not more than three works of art were to be found on which the artists had acknowledged their productions in a perfect tense (by ἐποίησε instead of ἐποίει)? This inscription? Why should we first learn from this inscription what we might have long ago learnt from many others? Had not Κλεομένης ἐποίησε been already found upon the statue of Germanicus? Ἀρχέλαος ἐποίησε upon the so-called deification of Homer? And Σαλπίων ἐποιησε upon the famous vase at Gaeta?[3]

Herr Winckelmann can truly say, "Who knows this better than I? but," he will also add, "so much the worse for Pliny; the oftener his assertion is contradicted, the more undeniably it is refuted."

[2] Lib. xxxvi. 4, 10.

[3] See the list of inscriptions on ancient works of art, in Mar. Gudius (ad Phædri fab. v. lib. 1), and cf. at the same time Gronovius's correction of this passage (Præf. ad tom. ix. Thesauri Antiq. Græc.).

Stay. What if Herr Winckelmann makes Pliny say more than he really means? and if thus the examples I adduced refute, not the assertion of Pliny, but merely the addition which Herr Winckelmann has made to this assertion? And this is really the case. I must quote the whole passage. Pliny, in his dedication to Titus, wishes to speak of his work with the modesty of a man who himself best knows how far it still falls short of perfection. He discovers a remarkable example of such modesty among the Greeks, the boastful promises of whose title-pages ("inscriptiones, propter quas vadimonium deseri possit") he has been criticizing somewhat; and goes on to say:[1] "Et ne in totum videar Græcos insectari, ex illis nos velim intelligi pingendi fingendique conditoribus, quos in libellis his invenies, absoluta opera, et illa quoque quæ mirando non satiamur, pendenti titulo inscripsisse: ut APELLES FACIEBAT, aut POLYCLETUS: tanquam inchoata semper arte et imperfecta: ut contra judiciorum varietates superesset artifici regressus ad veniam, velut emendaturo quidquid desideraretur, si non esset interceptus. Quare plenum verecundiæ illud est, quod omnia opera tanquam novissima inscripsere, et tanquam singulis fato adempti. Tria, non amplius, ut opinor, absolute traduntur inscripta, ILLE FECIT, quæ suis locis reddam: quo apparuit, summam artis securitatem auctori placuisse, et ob id magna invidia fuere omnia ea." I beg the reader to pay attention to Pliny's expression, "pingendi fingendique conditoribus." Pliny does not say that the custom of acknowledging their productions in the imperfect tense was universal among artists, or that all in every age had observed it; he expressly states that only the earliest masters, the creators of the plastic arts, *pingendi fingendique conditores*, Apelles, Polykletus, and their contemporaries, had shown this wise modesty; and since he only names these, he intimates quietly but distinctly enough that their successors, especially in later times, expressed greater confidence in themselves.

But if we allow this, as I think every one must, the inscription of one of the three artists of Laokoon which

[1] Lib. i.

has been discovered may be perfectly correct, without involving any untruth in Pliny's assertion that only three works were extant in the inscriptions on which their authors made use of the perfect tense, *i.e.* among the ancient works of the periods of Apelles, Polykletus, Nicias, or Lysippus. But if so, it cannot be correct, as Herr Winckelmann maintains, that Athenodorus and his fellow-sculptors were contemporaries of Apelles and Lysippus. We must rather conclude—if it is true that among the works of the ancient artists, of Apelles and Polykletus, and the rest of this class, only three were to be found in the inscriptions on which a perfect tense was used; if it is true that Pliny himself has mentioned these three works by name,[5] it follows that Athanodorus, to whom

[5] At least he expressly promises to do it: "quæ suis locis reddam." If, however, he has not entirely forgotten it, he has only mentioned it in passing, and not in the way one expects after such a pledge. When, for example, he writes (lib. xxxv. sect. 39): "Lysippus quoque Æginæ picturæ suæ inscripsit, ἐνέκαυσεν: quod profecto non fecisset, nisi encaustica inventa," it is manifest that he here adduces the word ἐνέκαυσεν as a proof of a very different fact. Had he, as Hardouin supposes, mentioned it as also being one of those works upon which the inscription was written in the aorist, he would not have failed to call attention to it. Hardouin thinks he discovers the other two works of this kind in the following passage: "Idem (Divus Augustus) in Curia quoque, quam in Comitio consecrabat, duas tabulas impressit parieti: Nemeam sedentem supra leonem, palmigeram ipsam, adstante cum baculo sene, cujus supra caput tabula bigæ dependet. Nicias scripsit se inussisse: tali enim usus est verbo. Alterius tabulæ admiratio est, puberem filium seni patri similem esse, salva ætatis differentia, supervolante aquila draconem complexa. Philochares hoc suum opus esse testatus est" (lib. xxxv. sect. 10). Here two different pictures are described, which Augustus put up in his newly built senate-house. The first was by Nikias; the second by Philochares. What is said of Philochares is plain enough; but about Nikias there are some difficulties. Nemea was represented seated upon a lion, with a palm-branch in her hand; an old man with a staff in his hand stood near her: "cujus supra caput tabula bigæ dependet." What does this mean? Above whose head there hung a tablet, upon which a two-horse chariot was painted? Yet this is the only sense which can be put upon the words. Thus another smaller picture was hung upon the main picture; and both of them were by Nikias? This is clearly what Hardouin understands. How else are two pictures of Nikias to be found, since one is expressly ascribed to Philochares? "Inscripsit Nicias igitur geminæ huic tabulæ suum nomen in hunc modum: O NIKIAΣ ΕΝΕΚΑΤΣΕΝ: atque adeo e tribus operibus, quæ absolute fuisse inscripta, ILLE FECIT, indicavit

neither of these three pieces is attributed, and who yet uses a perfect tense in the inscription on his work, does not belong to these ancient artists. He cannot be a contemporary of Apelles or Lysippus, but must be placed at a later period.

In short, I believe it may be admitted as a very trustworthy criterion that all artists who have made use of the ἐποίησε flourished long after the time of Alexander the

Præfatio ad Titum, duo hæc sunt Niciæ." I would ask Hardouin: Supposing Nikias had actually used the imperfect, and not the aorist, and Pliny had only wished to remark that the artist had employed ἐγκαλειν instead of γράφειν, would not the idiom of his language still have compelled him to say, *Nicias scripsit se inussisse?* But I will not insist upon this: it may really have been Pliny's intention to record here one of the works in question. But who would be convinced about the two pictures, one of which hung over the other? I, at least, never could. The words "cujus supra caput tabula bigæ dependet" must therefore be corrupt. *Tabula bigæ*, "A painting of a two-horse chariot," does not sound like Pliny's Latin, even allowing that he uses bigæ elsewhere in the singular. And what kind of two-horse chariot was it likely to be? Perhaps it was of the kind used in the Nemean games, and thus the less picture would, in respect to its subject, be connected with the principal one. But this supposition will not stand; for four-horse chariots, not two, were commonly used at the Nemean games (Schmidius in Prol. ad Nemeonicas, p. 2). It once occurred to me that Pliny might have written the Greek word πτυχίον instead of bigæ, and that the transcribers did not understand it. For we know, from a passage in Antigones Carystius, quoted by Zenobius (conf. Gronovius t. ix. Antiquit. Græc. Præf. p. 7), that the ancient artists did not always inscribe their names upon the works themselves, but sometimes upon a tablet affixed to the picture or statue. Such a tablet was called πτυχίον. This Greek word was perhaps explained by the gloss tabula, tabella; and tabula thus came to be inserted in the text. Bigæ arose out of πτυχίον, and thus the reading tabula bigæ may be accounted for. Nothing can agree better with what follows than πτυχίον, for the subsequent sentence contains what was inscribed upon it. The whole passage would stand thus: "cujus supra caput πτυχίον dependet, quo Nicias scripsit se inussisse." Still I acknowledge that this correction is a little bold. But we are not obliged to propose a correction for every passage that we can prove to be corrupt. I am contented with having performed the latter task, and leave the former to an abler hand. But to return to the point in question. If Pliny thus speaks of only one painting of Nikias upon which the inscription was in the aorist, and the second of this kind is that of Lysippus mentioned above, which then is the third? I know not. If I had to look for it in any other author than Pliny, I should feel no difficulty. It ought, however, to be found in Pliny, and there, I repeat, it is not.

Great, shortly before or under the Cæsars. Of Kleomenes it is indisputable; of Archelaus it is in the highest degree probable; and of Salpion the contrary at any rate cannot in any way be proved. The same may be said of the rest, without excepting Athenodorus.

Herr Winckelmann himself may act as judge in this question, but I protest in anticipation against the converse position. If all the artists who have made use of ἐποίησε belonged to a late period, it does not follow that all who used ἐποίει belonged to an early one. Even among the later artists there may have been some who really felt this modesty so becoming to a great man, and others who affected to feel it.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Next to the Laokoon I was most curious to see what Herr Winckelmann would say of the so-called Borghese gladiator. I believe that I have made a discovery about this statue, to which I attach all the importance that can be attributed to such discoveries.

I was afraid that Herr Winckelmann might have anticipated me. I do not, however, find any intimation of it in his work; and if anything could render me distrustful of the correctness of my conjectures, it would be the fact that my fears are not realized.

"Some," says Herr Winckelmann,[1] "take this to be the statue of a discobolus, *i.e.* of one who is throwing a discus or round plate of metal; and this was the opinion expressed by the celebrated Herr von Stosch in a letter to me, but formed, I think, without sufficient consideration of the attitude in which such a figure would stand. For a man who is just going to throw draws his body backwards, and at the moment of the act lets the whole of his weight fall upon his right leg, while the left remains idle; but here it is just the reverse; the whole frame is thrown forwards and leans upon the left leg, whilst the right is extended backwards as far as it can be. The right arm is new, and

[1] Gesch. der Kunst, vol. ii p. 394.

a piece of a lance has been placed in its hand; on the left arm may be seen the strap of the shield which he bore. If one observes that the head and the eyes are directed upwards, and that the figure appears to be guarding with the shield against something which threatens it from above, this statue may be regarded with more justice as representing a soldier who had especially distinguished himself in a situation of danger, for it is to be presumed that among the Greeks a statue was never erected in honour of a gladiator at the public shows; and, besides, this work seems older than the introduction of such spectacles into Greece."

No decision can be juster. This statue is no more that of a gladiator than of a discobolus; it really represents a warrior who in such a posture distinguished himself at some perilous crisis. But since Herr Winckelmann divined this so happily, how came he to stop short there? How was it that the warrior did not occur to his mind who, in precisely this posture, averted the overthrow of an entire army, and to whom his grateful country had a statue erected in precisely the same attitude?

In a word, the statue is Chabrias.

This is proved by the following passage from Nepos, in the Life of this general:[2] "Hic quoque in summis habitus est ducibus; resque multas memoria dignas gessit. Sed ex his elucet maxime, inventum ejus in prœlio, quod apud Thebas fecit quum Bœotiis subsidio venisset. Namque in eo victoriæ fidente summo duce Agesilao, fugatis jam ab eo conductitiis catervis, reliquam phalangem loco vetuit cedere, obnixoque genu scuto, projectaque hasta impetum excipere hostium docuit. Id novum Agesilaus contuens, progredi non est ausus, suosque jam incurrentes tuba revocavit. Hoc usque eo tota Græcia fama celebratum est, ut illo statu Chabrias sibi statuam fieri voluerit quæ publice ei ab Atheniensibus in foro constituta est. Ex quo factum est, ut postea athletæ, ceterique artifices his statibus in statuis ponendis uterentur, in quibus victoriam essent adepti."

I know the reader will pause an instant before he

[2] Cap. i.

bestows his assent, but I hope it will only be for an instant. The attitude of Chabrias does not appear to have been precisely the same as that of the Borghese statue. The lance thrown forward ("projecta hasta") is common to both; but commentators explain "obnixo genu scuto" by "obnixo in scutum"—"obfirmato genu ad scutum"; Chabrias showed his men how they should lean with their knees against their shields, and behind them await the enemy; the statue, on the contrary, raises its shield on high. But how if the commentators were wrong? Is it not possible that the words "obnixo genu scuto" ought not to be connected, but that "obnixo genu" and "scuto" should be taken separately, or the last read with the following words, "projectaque hasta"? If we only insert a single comma, the correspondence between the statue and description is complete. The statue is that of a soldier, "qui obnixo genu,[3] scuto projectaque hasta impetum hostis excipit." It represents Chabrias's action, and is the statue of Chabrias. That the comma is really wanting is proved by the *que* affixed to the *projecta*, which would be superfluous if "obnixo genu scuto" were connected; and, in fact, some editions have omitted it on that account.

The form of the characters in the artist's inscription upon the statue coincides exactly with the great antiquity which, under this supposition, must be accorded to the statue; and Herr Winckelmann has himself inferred from them that it is the most ancient of the statues now in Rome on which the masters have recorded their names. I leave it to his acute glance to determine whether he observes anything in its style which is in conflict with my opinion. Should he honour my suggestion with his

[3] Similarly Statius uses *obnixa pectora* (Thebaid. lib. vi. 863):—

". . . rumpunt obnixa furentes
Pectora,"

which the old commentator of Barth explains by "summa vi contra nitentia." Ovid also (Halieut. ii.) uses *obnixa fronte*, when speaking of the "scarus" endeavouring to force its way through the fish-trap, not with its head, but with its tail.

"Non audet radiis obnixa occurrere fronte."

approval, I shall flatter myself that I have produced a better instance of how happily the classical authors may be illustrated by the ancient works of art, and the latter in their turn by the former, than can be found in the whole of Spence's folio.

CHAPTER XXIX.

With all the boundless reading and most extensive and minute knowledge of art which Herr Winckelmann has applied to his task, he has worked in the noble confidence of the ancient artists who expended all their industry upon the main object, and either executed the parts of less importance with, as it were, intentional negligence, or left them altogether to the hands of any chance artist.

It is no small merit to have only fallen into faults that any one might have avoided; faults which are seen at the first cursory reading, and which if I notice at all it is only with the object of reminding certain people who think that they alone have eyes that they are not worth remarking.

Already in his writings upon the imitation of Grecian works of art Herr Winckelmann has been several times misled by Junius. Junius is a very insidious author. His whole work is a cento, and while he always uses the words of the ancients he not unfrequently applies passages to painting which bear reference to anything rather than painting in their original context. When, *e.g.*, Herr Winckelmann desires to teach us that perfection can no more be reached by the mere imitation of nature in art than it can in poetry, and that the painter as well as poet must prefer the impossible, which is probable, to the merely possible, he adds, "the possibility and truth which Longinus requires of a painter, as opposed to the incredible in poetry, is perfectly consistent with it." But this addition had much better have been omitted, for it exhibits a seeming contradiction in the two greatest critics on art which is altogether without foundation. It is not true that Longinus ever said anything of the kind. He makes a somewhat similar remark upon eloquence and

the art of poetry, but in no way upon poetry and painting. Ὡς δ' ἕτερόν τι ἡ ῥητορικὴ φαντασία βούλεται, καὶ ἕτερον ἡ παρὰ ποιηταῖς, οὐκ ἂν λάθοι σε, he writes to his friend Terentian;[1] οὐδ' ὅτι τῆς μὲν ἐν ποιήσει τέλος ἐστὶν ἔκπληξις, τῆς δ' ἐν λόγοις ἐναργεία. And again, Οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν παρὰ τοῖς ποιηταῖς μυθικωτέραν ἔχει τὴν ὑπερέκπτωσιν, καὶ παντῇ τὸ πιστὸν ὑπεραίρουσαν τῆς δὲ ῥητορικῆς φαντασίας, κάλλιστον ἀεὶ τὸ ἔμπρακτον καὶ ἐναληθές. Only Junius substitutes painting for oratory; and it was in him, and not in Longinus, that Herr Winckelmann read,[2] "Præsertim cum poeticæ phantasiæ finis sit ἔκπληξις, pictoriæ vero, ἐναργεία, καὶ τὰ μὲν παρὰ τοῖς ποιηταῖς, ut loquitur idem Longinus," &c. True, they are Longinus's words, but not Longinus's meaning.

The same must have been the case with the following observation: "All actions," he says,[3] "and attitudes of Greek figures which are not marked by the character of wisdom, but are too vehement and wild, fell into a fault, which the ancient artists called *parenthyrsus*." The ancient artists? That can only be proved out of Junius, for *parenthyrsus* was a technical term in rhetoric, and perhaps, as the passage in Longinus appears to intimate, used only by Theodorus. Τούτῳ παράκειται τρίτον τι κακίας εἶδος ἐν τοῖς παθητικοῖς, ὅπερ ὁ Θεόδωρος παρένθυρσον ἐκάλει· ἔστι δὲ πάθος ἄκαιρον καὶ κενόν, ἔνθα μὴ δεῖ πάθους· ἢ ἄμετρον ἔνθα μετρίου δεῖ.[4] I even doubt whether generally this word can be transferred to painting. For in eloquence and poetry there is a pathos which may be carried to its extreme point without becoming *parenthyrsus*. It is only the deepest pathos out of place that is *parenthyrsus*. But in the painting extreme pathos would always be *parenthyrsus*, even if it can be perfectly justified by the circumstances of the person who expresses it.

According to all appearance, therefore, the various inaccuracies in the History of Art have arisen merely from Herr Winckelmann having in haste consulted Junius instead of the originals. For instance, when he is proving

[1] περὶ Ὕψους, τμῆμα ιδ'. Edit. T. Fabri, pp. 36–39.
[2] De Pictura Vet. lib. I. cap. iv. p. 33.
[3] Von der Nachahmung der Griech. Werke, &c., p. 23.
[4] Τμῆμα β'.

by examples that among the Greeks all excellence in every art and craft was especially valued, and that the best workman even in the most trifling matters might succeed in immortalizing his name, he quotes among others the following instance:[5] "We know the name of a maker of particularly accurate balances or pairs of scales: it is Parthenius." Herr Winckelmann can only have read the words of Juvenal to which he is here referring, "Lances Parthenio factus," in the list of Junius; for if he had referred to Juvenal himself he would not have been misled by the equivocal meaning of the word "lanx," but would have seen at once from the context that the poet was speaking, not of balances and scales, but of plates and dishes. Juvenal is praising Catullus because in a perilous storm at sea he had done as the beaver does who mutilates himself to save his life,[6] and had thrown all his most valuable baggage overboard, in order that he and the ship might not go down together. These valuables he describes, and amongst other things says—

> "Ille nec argentum dubitabat mittere, lances
> Parthenio factas, urnæ cratera capacem
> Et dignum sitiente Pholo, vel conjuge Tusci.
> Adde et bascaudas et mille escaria, multum
> Cælati, biberet quo callidus emptor Olynthi."

What can *lances* mean here, joined as it is with goblets and kettles, but "plates and dishes"? and all Juvenal intends to say is that Catullus threw overboard his whole service of plate, among which were some embossed dishes of the workmanship of Parthenius. "Parthenius cælatoris nomen," says an old scholiast. But when Grangæus in his commentary adds to this name "sculptor, de quo Plinius," he must have written at haphazard, for Pliny does not mention any artist of this name.

"Even," continues Herr Winckelmann, "the name of the saddler, as we should call him, who made Ajax's leather shield has been preserved." But he cannot have derived this statement from the authority to which he

[5] Gesch. der Kunst, i. p. 136.
[6] [See Pliny, Nat. Hist. viii. 47.—Ed.]

refers his reader, viz. from Herodotus's Life of Homer. Certainly the lines of the Iliad are there quoted in which the poet applies the name of Tychios to this worker in leather; but it is expressly stated that properly a leather-worker of Homer's acquaintance was so called, whose name was inserted as a proof of friendship and gratitude.[7]

ἀπέδωκε δὲ χάριν καὶ Τυχίῳ τῷ σκύτει· ὃς ἐδέξατο αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ Νέῳ τείχει, προσελθόντα πρὸς τὸ σκυτεῖον, ἐν τοῖς ἔπεσι καταζεῦξας ἐν τῇ Ἰλιάδι τοῖς δέ:

αἳας δ' ἐγγύθεν ἦλθε φέρων σάκος ἠύτε πύργον,
χάλκεον ἑπταβόειον· ὃ οἱ Τύχιος κάμε τεύχων
Σκυτοτόμων ὄχ' ἄριστος, Ὕλῃ ἔνι οἰκία ναίων.

The position, therefore, is exactly opposite to that which Herr Winckelmann intended to maintain. The name of the saddler who made Ajax's shield was in Homer's time already so entirely forgotten that the poet was free to substitute a completely strange name in its stead.

Various other trifling faults are mere errors of memory, or refer to subjects which he only introduces cursorily as illustrations, *e.g.*—

It was Hercules, and not Bacchus, of whom Parrhasius boasted that he appeared to him in a vision in the same form in which he painted him.[8]

Tauriscus was not a native of Rhodes, but of Tralles in Lydia.[9]

The Antigone was not the first of Sophokles's tragedies.[10]

[7] Herod. de Vita Homeri. Edit. Wessel, p. 756. [v. *Il.* vii. 219.]

[8] Gesch. der Kunst, vol. i. p. 176. Plinius, lib. xxxv. sect. 36. Athenæus, lib. xii. p. 543.

[9] Gesch. der Kunst, vol. ii. p. 353. Plinius, lib. xxxvi. 4, 10. [Tauriscı, non cælatoris illius, sed Tralliani."]

[10] Gesch. der Kunst, ii. p. 328. "The Antigone, his first tragedy, was acted in the third year of the seventy-seventh Olympiad." The date is about correct, but it is quite incorrect that the Antigone was his first tragedy. Samuel Petit, whom Herr Winckelmann quotes in a note, is far from making this statement, but expressly places the Antigone in the third year of the eighty-fourth Olympiad. Sophokles, in the following year, accompanied Perikles to Samos; and the date of this

But I refrain from multiplying such trifles. For censoriousness it could not be taken; but whoever knows my

expedition can be fixed accurately. I show in my Life of Sophokles, by a comparison of a passage of the elder Pliny, that the first tragedy of this poet was, in all probability, the Triptolemus. Pliny is speaking (lib. xviii. sec. 12) of the different qualities of corn in different countries; and concludes: "Hæ fuere sententiæ, Alexandro Magno regnante, cum clarissima fuit Græcia, atque in toto terrarum orbe potentissima; ita tamen ut ante mortem ejus annis fere CXLV. Sophocles poeta in fabula Triptolemo frumentum Italicum ante cuncta laudaverit, ad verbum translata sententia:—

Et fortunatam Italiam frumento canere candido."

It is true that the first tragedy of Sophokles is not expressly spoken of here; but it proves that its date, which Plutarch and the Scholiast and the Arundel marbles all agree in placing in the seventy-seventh Olympiad, coincides so closely with the year which Pliny assigns to the Triptolemus, that this last must be allowed to have been the first tragedy of Sophokles. The calculation is fairly made out. Alexander died in the hundred and fourteenth Olympiad; a hundred and forty-five years are equivalent to thirty-six Olympiads and a year; if this number be subtracted from the total, there remain seventy-seven. Sophokles's Tripolemus therefore was published in the seventy-seventh Olympiad; in the same Olympiad, and even, as I prove, in the last year of it, his first tragedy was acted. The conclusion is obvious: they were one and the same tragedy. I prove, at the same time, therefore, that Petit might have spared himself the trouble of writing the whole half of the chapter in his Miscellanea (lib. iii. cap. xviii.) which Winckelmann has quoted. It is unnecessary in the passage in Pliny which he there wishes to amend to change the name of the archon *Aphesion* into *Demotion*, or *ἀνέψιος*. He had only to pass from the third year of the seventy-seventh Olympiad into the fourth, and he would have found that the archon of this year is as often, if not oftener, called Aphesion by ancient authors, as he is Phædon. He is called Phædon by Diodorus Siculus, Dionysius Halicarnassæus, and by the anonymous author of the table of the Olympiads. He is called Aphesion, on the other hand, on the Arundel marbles, by Apollodorus, and by Diogenes Laertius, who is quoting this latter. Plutarch speaks of him under both names: in the Life of Theseus, Phædon; in that of Cimon, Aphesion. The conjecture of Palmerius is therefore rendered probable: "Aphesionem et Phædonem Archontas fuisse eponymos; scilicet, uno in magistratu mortuo, suffectus fuit alter" (Exercit. p. 452). Herr Winckelmann, as I opportunely recollect, has allowed another error concerning Sophokles to creep into his first work on the Imitation of Grecian Works of Art (p. 8). "The most beautiful young people danced unclad upon the stage, and Sophokles, the great Sophokles, was, in his youth, the first who exhibited this spectacle to his fellow-citizens." Sophokles never danced unclad upon the stage. He did dance around the trophies after the victory of Sala-

high esteem for Herr Winckelmann might consider it *krokylegmus.*[11]

mis. According to some authors, he was naked when he did so; but according to others, he was clothed (Athen. lib. i. p. m. 20). Sophokles was, in fact, one of the boys who were carried over to Salamis for security; and it was upon this island that it was the pleasure of the tragic muse to assemble her three favourites in a typical gradation. The bold Æschylus contributed to the victory; the young Sophokles danced around the trophies; and Euripides was born upon that same fortunate isle on the very day of the victory.

[11] [κροκυλεγμός, *dealing in trifles*, a word found in Hesychius.—Ed.]

HOW THE ANCIENTS REPRESENTED DEATH.

NOTE.

The indisputable fact that nearly all Lessing's works owe their existence to some personal impetus has gained him the undesirable reputation of being a kind of philosophical Ishmaelite. But this is not absolutely the case. Lessing did not attack his contemporaries for the pure pleasure of aggression, but because as Heine so well expresses it "he was the living critique of his period." Polemics were his delight in so far as he hoped to rectify what was erroneous and hence when he saw himself or others unjustly attacked, he at once flew to his pen. But it was not fighting for fighting's sake, but for the sake of what he held to be the truth. After the publication of the 'Laokoon,' a certain Klotz, Professor of the University of Halle, published a very unwarrantable attack upon its accuracy and scholarship, and among other matters, he accused Lessing of having been guilty of "an unpardonable fault." Such an accusation from such a quarter highly exasperated Lessing, who was moreover in an irritable state at the time, owing to the failure of his scheme with the Hamburg theatre. This induced him to write his 'Antiquarian Letters,' which were true polemics, but it also led him to write his little essay 'How the Ancients represented Death,' which he was

very desirous should not be confounded with the circumstances that gave it birth, though it had also been prompted by a remark of Klotz's. Klotz had averred, in reply to Lessing's assertion in a note of the 'Laokoon' that the ancients never represented death as a skeleton, that they constantly thus represented it and referred to figures of skeletons found on gems and reliefs. Klotz had here confounded two distinct ideas, and Lessing, attracted by the theme, wrote this short essay to prove his theory. The result was that his idea of the genius with a reversed torch as a personification of death was eagerly accepted by his contemporaries, who were glad to banish the grinning skeleton of Christian and mediæval art. Goethe in 'Wahrheit und Dichtung' expresses the joy with which the essay was greeted. A few archæologists differed from Lessing in his interpretation of Pausanias, concerning the crossing of the feet, among them Heyne suggested that "bent outwardly" may be intended in lieu of "crossed," but agreed with Lessing that "crooked" could never have been meant. Such philological niceties do not detract from the excellence of the whole, and this little investigation has become a classic among Lessing's works, praised even by Goeze in the very midst of their bitter feud.

HOW THE ANCIENTS REPRESENTED DEATH.



Part of a SARCOPHAGUS. (From Bellori, see p. 183.)
"Nullique ea tristis imago."[1]—STATIUS.

PREFACE.

I SHOULD be sorry if this disquisition were to be estimated according to the circumstance that gave it occasion. This is so despicable, that only the manner in which I have used it can excuse me for having used it at all.

[1] Theb. 10, 105: "And to none does this shape seem sorrowful"

Not indeed that I do not consider our present public to be too delicately averse to all that is called polemics, or resembles it. It seems as though it wished to forget that it owes the elucidation of many an important point to mere contradiction, and that mankind would be of one mind on no subject in the world if they had as yet never wrangled about anything.

"Wrangled," for so politeness names all discussion. Wrangling has become something so unmannerly that we must be less ashamed of hatred and calumny than of controversy.

If however the greater part of the public, which will not hear of controversial writings, consisted of authors, then it might perhaps be something else than mere politeness that was intolerant of a polemical tone. It is so displeasing to egotism and self-conceit! It is so dangerous to the surreptitious reputation!

And truth, they say, so rarely gains thereby.—So rarely? Granted that as yet truth has been established through no contest; yet nevertheless truth has gained by every controversy. Controversies have stimulated the spirit of investigation, have kept prejudice and authority in constant convulsion; in brief, have hindered gilded untruth from taking root in the place of truth.

Neither can I share the opinion that controversies are only demanded by the most important truths. Importance is a relative idea, and what is very unimportant in one respect may become very important in another. As a constituent of our cognition one truth is therefore as important as another; and whoever is indifferent in the most trifling matter to truth and untruth, will never persuade me that he loves truth merely for the sake of truth.

I will not impose my way of thinking concerning this matter on any one. But I may at least beg him who differs from me most widely, if he intends to speak publicly of this investigation, to forget that it is aimed at any one. Let him enter upon the subject and keep silence concerning the personages. To which of these the art critic is most inclined, which he holds in general to be the best writer, nobody demands to know from him. All that is desired to learn from him is this, whether he, on his part,

has aught to place in the scale of the one or the other which in the present instance would turn, or further weight the scales. Only such extra weight, frankly accorded, makes him that which he wishes to be; but he must not fancy that his mere bold enunciation would be such an extra weight. If he be the man who overtops us both, let him seize the opportunity to instruct us both.

Of the irregularity which he will soon perceive in my work, he may say what likes him best. If only he does not let the subject be prejudiced thereby. I might certainly have set to work more systematically; I might have placed my reasons in a more advantageous light; I might still have used this or that rare or precious book; indeed what might I not have done!

It is moreover only on long-known monuments of ancient art on which I have been enabled to lay the foundations of my investigation. Treasures of this kind are daily brought to light, and I myself should wish to be among those who can first satiate their thirst for knowledge. But it would be singular if only he should be deemed rich who possesses the most newly minted money. It is rather the part of prudence not to have too much to do with this before its true value has been established beyond question.

The antiquarian who, to prove a new assertion, refers us to an ancient work of art that only he knows, that he has first discovered, may be a very honest man, and it would be sad for research if this were not the case with seven-eighths of the confraternity. But he, who grounds his assertion only on that which a Boissard or Pighius has seen a hundred or more years before him, can positively be no cheat, and to discover something new in the old, is at least as laudable, as to confirm the old through the new.



GEM. (From Licetus, see p. 200.)

THE CAUSE.

HERR KLOTZ always thinks he is at my heels. But always when I turn to look after him at his call, I see him wandering in a cloud of dust, quite at one side on a road that I have never trodden. "Herr Lessing," so runs his latest call of this nature,[1] "will permit me to assign to his assertion that the ancient artists did not represent death as a skeleton ('Laokoon,' ch. xi. note,) the same value as to his two other propositions, that the ancients never represented a fury, or a hovering figure without wings. He cannot even persuade himself that the recumbent bronze skeleton which rests with one arm on a cinerary urn in the Ducal Gallery at Florence, is a real antique. Perhaps he would be more easily persuaded, if he looked at the engraved gems on which a complete skeleton is portrayed (see Buonarotti, 'Oss. sopr. alc. Vetri,' t. xxxviii. 3, and Lippert's 'Daktyliothek,' 2nd 1000, n. 998). In the Museum Florentinum this skeleton to which an old man

[1] In the preface to the second part of Caylus's treatises. [For the controverted statements in 'Laokoon,' see above, pp. 15 *note* and 51 *note* 1, 65 *note* 3, and especially 73, *note* 1.]

in a sitting attitude is playing something on the flute is likewise to be seen on a gem. (See 'Les Satires de Perse, par Sinner,' p. 30.) But engraved stones belong to allegory, Herr Lessing will say. Well then I refer him to the metallic skeleton in the Kircherian Museum (see 'Ficoroni Gemmas antiq. rarior.' t. viii.). If he is not yet satisfied, I will over and above remind him that Herr Winckelmann, in his 'Essay on Allegory,' p. 81, has already taken notice of two ancient marble urns in Rome on which skeletons stand. If my numerous examples are not tedious to Herr Lessing, I will still add 'Sponii Miscell. Antiq. Erud.' sect. i. art. III., especially No. 5. And since I have once taken the liberty to note some things against him, I must refer him to the splendid collection of painted vases possessed by Mr. Hamilton, to show him another fury on a vase (Collection of Etruscan, Grecian, and Roman antiquities from the cabinet of the Hon. Wm. Hamilton, No. 6)."

It is, by Heaven, a great liberty, forsooth, to contradict me! And whoever contradicts me must I suppose be very careful whether he is tedious to me or no!

Unquestionably a contradiction such as Herr Klotz charges me with, is enough at any rate, to put the coolest, calmest man out of temper. If I say "it is not yet night," then Herr Klotz says, "but it is long past noon." If I say "seven and seven do not make fifteen," then he says, "but seven and eight do make fifteen." And this is what he calls contradicting me, confuting me, convicting me of unpardonable errors.

I beg of him for one moment to have rather more recourse to his understanding than to his memory.

I have asserted that the ancient artists did not represent Death as a skeleton, and I assert it still. But is to say that the ancient artists did not represent Death as a skeleton the same thing as saying that they never represented a skeleton at all? Is there absolutely no difference between these two sentences, so that he who proves the one must needs prove the other? that he who denies the one must needs deny the other?

Here is an engraved gem, and a marble urn, and there a brazen image; all are undoubtedly antique, and all

represent a skeleton. Very good. Who does not know this? Who can help knowing this if there is nothing amiss with his fingers and eyes, as soon as he wishes to know it? Must antique works of art be always construed allegorically?

These antique works of art represent skeletons; but do these skeletons represent Death? Must a skeleton of necessity represent Death, the personified abstraction of Death, the deity of Death? Why should not a skeleton simply represent a skeleton? Why not even something else?

INQUIRY.

Herr Klotz's acumen goes far! I need not answer him more, but yet I will do more than I need. Since some other scholars more or less share Herr Klotz's perverse idea, I will establish two things for their benefit.

Firstly: that the ancient artists really represented Death, the deity of Death, under quite another image than that of a skeleton.

Secondly: that the ancient artists, when they represented a skeleton, meant by this skeleton something quite different from Death as the deity of Death.

I. The ancient artists did not portray Death as a skeleton, for they portrayed him according to the Homeric idea,[1] as the twin brother of Sleep, and represented both Death and Sleep, with that likeness between them which we naturally expect in twins. On a chest of cedarwood in the temple of Juno at Elis, they both rested as boys in the arms of Night. Only the one was white, the other black; the one slept, the other seemed to sleep; both with their feet crossed.[2]

Here I will invoke a principle to which, probably, very few exceptions will be found, namely this, that the ancients faithfully retained the sensuous representation which had once been given to an ideal being. For even though such representations are arbitrary, and every one has an equal right to conceive them thus or thus, yet the ancients held

[1] Il. xvi. 681, 2. [2] Pausanias, Eliac. cap. xviii p. 422.

it good and needful that the late comers should waive this right and follow the first inventor. The cause is clear: without this general uniformity no general recognition is possible.

Consequently this resemblance of Death to Sleep, once accepted by the Greek artists, will, according to all likelihood, have been always observed by them. It showed itself indubitably on the statues which these two beings had at Lacedæmon, for they reminded Pausanias[3] of Homer's representation of them as brothers.

Now what most distant resemblance with Sleep can be conceived, if Death stood beside him as a mere skeleton?

"Perhaps," writes Winckelmann,[4] "Death was thus portrayed by the inhabitants of Gades, the modern Cadiz, who among all peoples were the only one who worshipped Death."

Now Winckelmann had not the faintest reason for this "perhaps." Philostratus[5] only says of the Gaditani "that they were the only people who sang pæans to Death." He does not even name a statue, not to mention that he gives us no reason whatever to presume that this statue represented a skeleton. Finally, what has the representation of the Gaditani to do with the matter? It is a question of the symbolical pictures of the Greeks, not of those of the barbarians.

I observe, by the way, that I cannot concur with Winckelmann in rendering the words of Philostratus, *τὸν θάνατον μόνοι ἀνθρώπων παιανίζονται*, as "the Gaditani were among all peoples the only one who worshipped Death." *Worshipped* says too little for the Gaditani, and denies too much of the other peoples. Even among the Greeks Death was not wholly unreverenced. The peculiarity of the Gaditani was only this, that they held the deity of Death to be accessible to entreaty, that they believed that they could by sacrifices and pæans mollify his rigour and delay his decrees. For pæans mean in their special sense, songs sung to a deity to avert some evil. Philostratus seems to refer to the passage in Æschylus, where it is

[3] Laconic. cap. xix. p. 253. [4] Allego. p. 83.
[5] Vita Apoll. lib. v. c. 4.

said of Death, that he is the only one among the gods who regards no gifts and hence has no altars, to whom no pæans are sung:

Οὐδ' ἔστι βωμὸς, οὐδὲ παιωνίζεται.

Winckelmann himself mentions in his 'Essay on Allegory' regarding Sleep,[6] that on a gravestone in the Palazzo Albani, Sleep is represented as a young genius resting on a reversed torch, beside his brother Death, "and just so represented these two genii may be found on a cinerary urn in the Collegio Clementino in Rome." I wish he had recollected this representation when dealing with Death itself. Then we should not miss the only genuine and general representation of Death where he furnishes us only with various allegories of various modes of dying.

We might also wish that Winckelmann had described the two monuments somewhat more precisely. But he says very little about them, and this little is not as definite as it might be. Sleep leans upon a reversed torch; but does Death do so too? and exactly in the same way? Is there not any distinction between both genii? and what is it? I do not know that these monuments have been much known elsewhere where one might find an answer for oneself.

However they are, happily, not unique of their kind. Winckelmann did not notice anything on them that was not noticeable on others that had been known long before him. He saw a young genius with a reversed torch and the distinct superscription *Somno;* but on a gravestone in Boissard[7] we see the same figure, and the inscription *Somno Orestilia Filia* leaves us as little in doubt as to its meaning. It often occurs in the same place without inscription, indeed on more than one gravestone and sarcophagus it occurs in duplicate.[8] Now what in this exactly similar duplication can the other more fitly be than the twin-brother of Sleep, Death, if the one be a picture of Sleep?

It is surprising that archæologists should not know this, or if they knew it should forget to apply it in

[6] p. 76. [7] Topograph. parte iii. p. 48. [8] Parte v. pp. 22, 23.

their expositions. I will only give a few examples of this.

Before all others I remember the marble sarcophagus which Bellori made known in his 'Admiranda,'[9] and has explained as relating to the last fate of man. Here is shown among other things a winged youth who stands in a pensive attitude beside a corpse, his left foot crossing his right, his right hand and his head resting on a reversed torch supported on the breast of the corpse, and in his left hand which grasps the torch, he holds a wreath with a butterfly.[10] This figure, says Bellori, is Amor, who is extinguishing the torch, that is to say the affections, on the breast of the dead man. And I say, this figure is Death.

Not every winged boy or youth need be an Amor. Amor and the swarm of his brothers had this formation in common with various spiritual beings. How many of the race of genii were represented as boys?[11] And what had not its genius? Every place, every man, every social connexion of mankind, every occupation of men from the lowest to the highest,[12] yes I might say, every inanimate thing, whose preservation was of consequence, had its genius. If this had not been a wholly unknown matter, to Hêrr Klotz among others also, he would surely not have spared us the greater part of his sugary story of Amor on engraved gems.[13] With the most attentive fingers this great scholar searched for this pretty little god through all engraved books, and wherever he only saw a little naked boy, there he cried: Amor! Amor! and registered him quickly in his catalogue. I wish him much patience who will scrutinize these Klotzian Amors. At each moment he will have to eject one from the ranks. But of this elsewhere.

Enough that not every winged boy or youth must necessarily be an Amor; for then this one on the monument of Bellori need least of all be so.

And absolutely cannot so be! For no allegorical figure

[9] Tab. lxxix.
[10] [See illustration, p. 175.]
[11] Barthius ad Kutilii lib. i. v. 327, p. 121.
[12] *Ibid.* p. 128.
[13] Über den Nutzen und Gebr. der alt. geschnitt. St. pp. 194–224.

may be contradictory to itself. This however an Amor would be whose work it is to extinguish the affections in the breast of man. Such an Amor is just on this account no Amor.

Rather everything that is about and on this winged youth speaks in favour of the figure of Death.

For if it had only been proved of Sleep that the ancients represented him as a young genius with wings, this alone would sufficiently justify us in presuming the same of his twin brother, Death. "Somni idolum senile fingitur." Barth wrote in a happy-go-lucky way[14] to justify his punctuation of a passage in Statius:

> "Crimine quo merui, juvenis placidissime divûm,
> Quove errore miser, donis ut solus egerem
> Somne tuis?——"

the poet implored Sleep, and Barth would have that the poet said *juvenis* of himself, not of Sleep.

> "Crimine quo merui juvenis, placidissime divûm," &c.

So be it, because at a pinch so it might be, but the reason is nevertheless quite futile. Sleep was a youthful deity with all poets, he loved one of the Graces, and Juno, in return for an important service, gave him this Grace to wife. And yet artists are declared to have represented him as an old man? That could not be credited of them, even if the contrary were no longer visible on any monument.

But not only Sleep, as we see, but another Sleep, that can be no other than Death, is to be beheld on the less known monuments of Winckelmann, and on those more familiar of Boissard, as a young genius with reversed torch. If Death is a young genius there, why could not also a young genius be Death here? And must he not so be, since, besides the reversed torch, all his other attributes are the most beautiful, most eloquent attributes of Death?

What can more distinctly indicate the end of life than an extinguished, reversed torch? If it is Sleep, this short interruption to life, who here rests on such a torch, with how much greater right may not Death do so?

[14] Ad Statium, Silv. v. 4.

The wings too are even more fitly his than Sleep's. His assault is even more sudden, his passage more rapid.

"——Seu me tranquilla Senectus
Expectat, seu Mors atris circumvolat alis"

—says Horace.[15]

And the wreath in his left hand? It is the mortuary garland. All corpses were wreathed among the Greeks and Romans; wreaths were strewn upon the corpse by surviving friends; the funeral pile, urn and monument were decked with wreaths.[16]

Finally, the butterfly above this wreath? Who does not know that a butterfly is the emblem of the soul, and especially of the departed soul?

To this must be added the entire position of the figure, beside a corpse and leaning upon this corpse. What deity, what higher being could and might take this position, save Death himself? A dead body, according to the idea of the ancients, polluted all that approached it, and not only the mortals who touched it or did but behold it, but even the gods themselves. The sight of a corpse was absolutely forbidden to all of them.

——ἐμοὶ γὰρ οὐ θέμις φθιτοὺς ὁρᾶν

Euripides[17] makes Diana say to the dying Hippolytus. Yes, to avoid this spectacle they had to withdraw as soon as the dying man drew his last breath. For Diana continues thus:

οὐδ' ὄμμα χραίνειν θανασίμοισιν ἐκπνοαῖς·
ὁρῶ δὲ σ' ἤδη τοῦδε πλησίον κακοῦ·

—and therewith departs from her favourite. For the same reason Apollo says in the same poet[18] that he must now depart from the cherished abode of Admetus because Alkestis nears her end.

ἐγώ δε, μὴ μίασμά μ' ἐν δόμοις κίχῃ,
λείπω μελάθρων τῶνδε φιλτάτην στέγην.

[15] Lib. ii. Sat. i. v. 57, 58.
[16] Car. Paschalii Coronarum, lib. iv. c 5.
[17] Hippol. v. 1437. [18] Alc. v. 22, 23.

I consider this circumstance, that the gods might not pollute themselves by the sight of a corpse, as very cogent in this place. It is a second reason why it cannot be Amor who stands beside the corpse, and is also a reason against all the other gods, the one god alone excepted who cannot possibly pollute himself by regarding a corpse, Death himself.

Or is it thought that perchance yet another deity is to be excepted, namely, the especial genius, the especial guardian spirit of man? Would it then be something preposterous, it might be said, if a man's genius stood mourning beside his body, since its vital extinction forces him to separate from it for ever? Yet even though this idea would not be preposterous, it would be wholly opposed to the ancient mode of thought, according to which even a man's guardian spirit did not await his actual death, but parted from him before the total separation of body and soul ensued. This is manifestly attested by several passages,[19] and consequently this genius cannot be the especial genius of the just departed mortal on whose breast he is resting his torch.

I must not pass over in silence a peculiarity in his position. I seem to find in it a confirmation of a conjecture which I advanced in the same part of the Laokoon.[20] This conjecture encountered objections; it may now be seen whether on good grounds.

When namely Pausanias describes the representation on a sarcophagus in the temple of Juno at Elis, above named, where among other things there appears a woman who holds in her right arm a white sleeping boy, and in her left a black boy, *καθεύδοντι ἐοίκοτα*, which may equally mean "who resembles the sleeping boy" as "who seems to sleep," he adds: *ἀμφοτέρους διεστραμμένους τοὺς πόδας*. These words are rendered by the Latin translator as *distortis utrinque pedibus*, and by the French as *les pieds contrefaits*. I asked to what purpose the crooked feet here? How come Sleep and Death by these unshapely limbs? What are they meant to indicate? And, at a loss for an

[19] Wonna, Exercit. iii. de Geniis, cap. 2, § 7. [20] See above, p. 73 note.

answer, I proposed to translate διεστραμμένους τοὺς πόδας not by "crooked" but by "crossed feet," because this is the usual position of sleepers, and Sleep is thus represented on ancient monuments.

It will be needful first to quote the whole passage in its connected form, because Sylburg deemed an emendation necessary in those very words. πεποίηται δὲ γυνὴ παῖδα λευκὸν καθεύδοντα ἀνέχουσα τῇ δεξιᾷ χειρὶ, τῇ δὲ ἑτέρᾳ μέλανα ἔχει παῖδα καθεύδοντι ἐοίκοτα, ἀμφοτέρους διεστραμμένους τοὺς πόδας. Sylburg deemed διεστραμμένους objectionable, and thought that it would be better to read διεστραμμένον instead, because it is preceded by ἐοίκοτα, and both refer to παῖδα.[21] Now this change would not only be superfluous, but also quite false. Superfluous, because why should this διαστρέφεσθαι refer just to παῖδα, since it may as well refer to ἀμφοτέρους or πόδας? False, because thus ἀμφοτέρους could only belong to πόδας, and we should have to translate "crooked in both feet," while it still refers to the double παῖδα, and we must translate "both with crooked feet." That is to say, if διεστραμμένος here means crooked and can mean crooked at all!

Now I must confess that when I wrote the passage in the 'Laokoon,' I knew of no reason why Sleep and Death should be depicted with crooked feet. Only afterwards I found in Rondel [22] that the ancients meant to denote by these crooked feet, the ambiguity and fallaciousness of dreams. But on what is this action founded? and what does it mean? What it should explain, it would only half explain at best. Death surely is dreamless, and yet Death has the same crooked feet. For, as I have said, ἀμφοτέρους must needs refer to the preceding double παῖδα, else ἀμφοτέρους taken with τοὺς πόδας would be a very shallow pleonasm. If a being has crooked feet at all, it follows of itself that both feet are crooked.

But if some one only on this account submitted to Sylburg's reading (διεστραμμένον for διεστραμμένους) in order to be able to give the crooked feet to Sleep alone? Then

[21] Rectius διεστραμμένον, ut antea ἐοίκοτα, respiciunt enim accusativum παῖδα.

[22] Expos. Signi veteris Tolliani, p. 294. Fortuitorum Jacobi Tollii.

let this obstinate man show me any antique Sleep with such feet. There are enough statues as well as *bas-reliefs* extant, which archæologists unanimously recognise as Sleep. Where is there one on which crooked feet can as much as be suspected?

What follows hence? If the crooked feet of Death and Sleep cannot be satisfactorily interpreted; if crooked feet assigned to the latter are not in any antique representation, then I think nothing follows more naturally than the presumption that the crooked feet here are a mere conceit. They are founded on the single passage in Pausanias, on a single word in that passage, and this word is over and above capable of quite another meaning.

For διεστραμμένος from διαστρέφειν does not mean only "crooked," "bent," as "distorted" in general, "brought out of its direction"; not so much *tortuosus*, *distortus*, as *obliquus*, *transversus*, and πόδας διεστραμμένοι can be translated as well by transverse, obliquely placed feet, as by crooked feet; indeed it is better and more accurately rendered by the former than by the latter.

But that διεστραμμένος could be thus translated would be little to the point. The apparent meaning is not always the true one. The following is of greater weight and gives a complete turn to the scale; to translate πόδας διεστραμμένοι as I suggest by "with crossed feet" is, in the case of Death as well as of Sleep, not only most beautiful and appropriate in meaning, but is also often to be seen on ancient monuments.

Crossed feet are the natural attitude of a sleeper when sleeping a quiet healthful sleep. This position has unanimously been given by the ancient artists to every person whom they wished to depict in such sleep. Thus the so-called Cleopatra sleeps in the Belvedere; thus sleeps the Nymph on an old monument in Boissard; so sleeps, or is about to sink into sleep, the Hermaphrodite of Dioskurides. It would be superfluous to multiply such examples. I can only at present recall one ancient figure sleeping in another posture. (Herr Klotz is still very welcome to run quickly over pages of his books of engravings and show me several more.) But this single figure is a drunken faun too overtaken in wine for a quiet

sleep.[23] The ancient artists observed this attitude down to sleeping animals. The two antique lions of yellowish marble among the royal antiquities at Berlin sleep with their fore-paws crossed and rest their heads on them. No wonder therefore that Sleep himself has been represented by them in the attitude so common to sleepers. I have referred to Sleep in Maffei[24] and I might equally well have referred to a similar marble in Tollius. Maffei also mentions two smaller ones, formerly belonging to Constable Colonna, little or in no respect different.

Even in waking figures the posture of crossed feet is a sign of repose. Not a few of the half or wholly recumbent figures of river gods rest thus on their urns, and even in standing persons one foot crossing the other is the actual attitude of pause and quiescence. Therefore Mercuries and Fauns sometimes appear in this position, especially if we find them absorbed in their flute-playing or some other recreation.

Now let all these probabilities be weighed against the mere downright contradictions with which it has been endeavoured to dispose of my explanation. The profoundest is the following, from a scholar to whom I am indebted for more important admonitions. "The Lessing explanation of διεστραμμένους τοὺς πόδας," says the author of the 'Kritischen Wälder,'[25] "seems to contradict linguistic usage; and if we are to venture conjectures, I could just as well say 'they slept with crossed feet,' *i.e.* the foot of the one stretched over the foot of the other, to show the relationship of Death and Sleep," &c.

Against linguistic usage? How so? Does διεστραμμένος mean anything else but related? and must all that is related be necessarily crooked? How could the one with crossed feet be named more exactly and better in Greek than διεστραμμένον (κατὰ) τοὺς πόδας? or διεστραμμένους τοὺς πόδας, with ἔχοντα understood? I do not know in the least what there is herein against the natural meaning of words or opposed to the genuine construction of the

[23] In Maffei (t. xciv.) where we must resent the taste of this commentator who desires perforce to turn such an indecent figure into a Bacchus. [24] Tabl. cli. [25] [Herder, Tr.]

language. If Pausanias meant to say "crooked," why did he not use the usual word σκολιός?

There is undoubtedly much room for conjecture. But does a conjecture, which has nothing but mere possibility in its favour, deserve to be opposed to another that wants little of being an established truth? Nay, I can scarcely allow the conjecture that is opposed to mine to be even possible. For the one boy rested in the one arm, the other in the other arm of Night; consequently the entwinement of the feet of the one with the feet of the other can scarcely be understood.

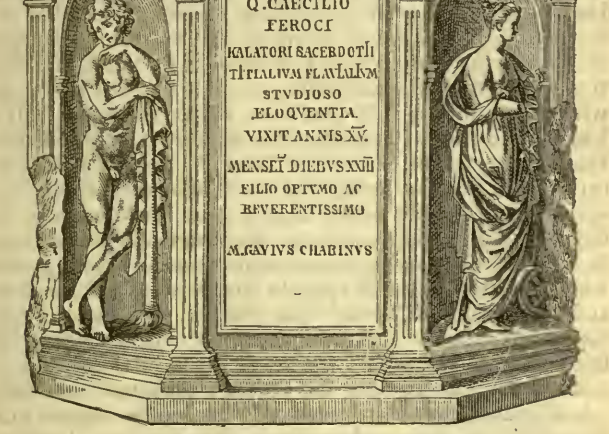
Finally, assuming the possibility of this enlacement, would διεστραμμένους, which is meant to express it, then not also mean something quite different from crooked? Would not this meaning be also opposed to customary usage? Would not the conjecture of my opponent be exposed to the difficulty to which he thinks mine is exposed, without having a single one of the recommendations which he cannot deny to mine?

To return to the plate in Bellori's collection. If it is proved, from what I have hitherto adduced, that the ancient artists represented Sleep with crossed feet; if it is proved that they gave to Death an exact resemblance to Sleep, they would in all probability not have omitted to depict Death with crossed feet. And how, if this very illustration in Bellori were a proof of this? For it really stands with one foot crossing the other, and this peculiarity of attitude can serve as well, I think, to confirm the meaning of the whole figure, as the elsewhere demonstrated meaning of the latter would suffice to establish the characteristic point of this particular attitude.

But it must be understood that I should not form my conclusions so rapidly and confidently if this were the only ancient monument on which the crossed feet are shown on the figure of Death. For nothing would be more natural than to object to me: "If the ancient artists depicted Sleep with crossed feet, then they only portrayed him as recumbent, as himself a sleeper; from this position of Sleep in sleep little or nothing can be deduced as to his attitude when erect, or still less as to the corresponding posture of his counterpart, Death, and it may be a mere

accident that Death once happens to stand in the manner in which we generally see Sleep sleeping."

This objection could only be obviated by the production of several monuments showing that which I think I discover in the figure engraved by Bellori. I hasten therefore to indicate as many of these as are sufficient for the induction, and believe that it will be deemed no mere superfluous ornamentation if I produce some of the most remarkable of these in illustration.



(I.) Monument. (From Boissard.)

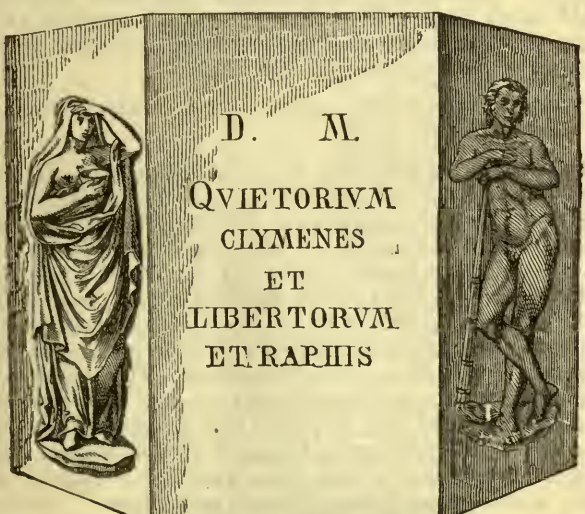
First, therefore, appears the above-named monument in Boissard. Since the express superscription of these figures leaves no room for a misapprehension of their meaning, it may be regarded as the key to all the rest. How does the figure show itself which is here called Somno Orestilia Filia? As a naked youth who casts a mournful look sideways to earth, who leans on a reversed torch, and crosses one foot over the other.

I ought not to omit to mention that there is also a

drawing of this very same monument amongst the papers of Pighius in the Royal Library at Berlin, from which Spanheim has incorporated the single figure of Sleep in his commentary on Kallimachus.[26] That it must be identically the same figure from the same monument given by Boissard is indisputable from the identity of the superscription. But so much more is one astonished at seeing such remarkable differences in the two. The slender grown-up form in Boissard is in Pighius a plump sturdy boy; the latter has wings, the former none; to say nothing of smaller differences in the turn of the head and the position of the arms. How it was that these differences escaped being noticed by Spanheim is conceivable: Spanheim knew the monument only through Gruter's Inscriptions, where he found only the words without any engraving. He did not know or did not remember that the engraving was already published in Boissard, and thus thought that he was imparting something quite unknown, when he furnished it in part from Pighius's papers. It is less easy to excuse Gravius, who in his edition of Gruter's Inscriptions added the design from Boissard,[27] and at the same time did not notice the contradiction between this design and Gruter's verbal description. In the latter the figure is *Genius alatus, crinitus, obesus, dormiens, dextra manu in humerum sinistrum, a quo velum retrorsum dependet, posita;* while in the former it appears frontwise as we see here, and altogether different—not winged, not with really copious hair, not fat, not asleep, and not with the right hand upon the left shoulder. Such discrepancy is scandalous, and cannot but awaken the reader's mistrust, especially when he does not find a word of warning in respect to it. Meanwhile it proves thus much, that the two drawings cannot both be immediately copied from the monument; one of them must necessarily have been drawn from memory. Whether this is Pighius's design or Boissard's can only be decided by one who has opportunity of comparing therewith the monument itself. According to the account of the latter it was to be found in Card. Cesi's palace in Rome. But this palace, if I am correctly

[26] At ver. 234 of Hymn. in Delum. Ed. Ern. p. 524. [27] P. cccix

informed, was utterly destroyed in the sack of 1527. Several of the antiquities which Boissard there saw might now be in the Farnese Palace; this I assume is the case in respect to the Hermaphrodite and the supposed Head of Pyrrhus.[28] Others I believe I have found again in other cabinets—in short, they are scattered, and it would be difficult to discover the monument of which we are speaking even if it is still in existence. On mere supposition I would just as little declare in favour of Boissard's drawings as of Pighius's. For if it is certain that Sleep can have wings it is just as certain that he need not necessarily have wings.



(ii.)—MONUMENT. (From Boissard.)

The second illustration shows the monument of a certain Clymene, also taken from Boissard.[29] One of these

[28] "Hermaphroditus nudus, qui involutum palliolo femur habet—Caput ingens Pyrrhi regis Epirotarum, galeatum, cristatum, et armato pectore." Topogr. parte i. pp. 4, 5; Winckelmann's Anmerk. üb. d. Gesch. d. Kunst, p. 98.

[29] Par. vi. p. 119.

figures has so much resemblance to the before named, that this resemblance and the place it occupies can no longer leave us in doubt on its account. It can be nothing else but Sleep, and this Sleep, also leaning on a reversed torch, has the feet placed one over the other. It is also without wings, and it would indeed be singular if Boissard had forgotten them here a second time, but as I have said, the ancients may often have represented Sleep without wings. Pausanias does not give any to Sleep in the arms of Night; neither do Statius nor Ovid accord him such in their detailed description of this god and his habitation. Brouckhuysen has been much at fault when he says that the latter poet actually gave Sleep two pairs of wings, one at his head and one at his feet. For although Statius says of him—

> "Ipse quoque et volucrem gressum et ventosa citavit
> Tempora" [30]

—this is not in the least to be understood of natural wings, but of the winged petasus and the talaria, which the poets bestow not only on Mercury, but frequently also on other deities when they wish to represent them in extraordinary haste. But I am not at all concerned with the wings but the feet of Sleep, and I continue to show the *διεστραμμένον* of the same on various monuments.

Our third illustration shows a Pila or a sarcophagus, which is again taken from Boissard.[31] The inscription also occurs in Gruter,[32] where the two genii with reversed torches are called two Cupids. But we are already too conversant with this figure of Sleep to mistake it here. And this Sleep also stands both times with feet crossed. And why is this same figure repeated twice here? Not so much repeated, as doubled; to show image and counter-image. Both are Sleep; the one the transient, the other the long-enduring Sleep; in a word, they are the resembling twin brothers, Sleep and Death. I may conjecture

[30] Ad Tibullum, lib. ii. Eleg. i. v. 89: "Et sic quidem poetæ plerique omnes, videlicet ut alas habuerit hic deus in humeris. Papinius autem, suo quodam jure peculiari, alas ei in pedibus et in capite adfingit." L. 10, Theb. v. 131.

[31] Par. v. p. 115.

[32] Pag. DCCXII.



(iii.)—Sarcophagus. (From Boissard.)

that as we see them here, so and not otherwise, they will appear on the monuments mentioned by Winckelmann; on the sepulchral stone of the Palazzo Albani and on the cinerary urn of the Collegium Clementinum. We must not be misled by the bows that here lie at their feet; these may belong to the floating genii just as well as to the standing ones, and I have seen on various monuments an unstrung or even a broken bow, not as the attribute of Amor, but as an image totally unconnected with him, of spent life in general. How a bow could be the image of a good housewife I do not know, and yet an old epitaph, made known by Leich from the unpublished Anthology,[33] says that so it has been:—

Τόξα μὲν αὐδάσει τὰν εὔτονον ἄγετιν οἶκου·

And from this it is at least apparent that it need not of necessity be the weapon of Amor, and that it may mean more than we can explain.

I append a fourth illustration. This is a monument found by Boissard in Rome in St. Angelo ("in Templo Junonis quod est in foro piscatorio"), and where beyond doubt it may still be found.[34] Behind a closed door stands on either side a winged genius, half of whose body projects, and who points with his hand to the closed door. The representation is too expressive not to recall the *domus exilis Plutonia*,[35] from whence no release can be hoped; and who could more fitly be the warders of this eternal prison than Sleep and Death? In the position and action in which we see them no reversed torch is needed to define them more accurately; but the artist has given them the crossed feet. Yet how unnatural this posture would be in this place if it were not expressly meant to be characteristic!

Let it not be thought that these are all the examples I could adduce on my side of the question. Even from Boissard I could bring forward several more, where Death, either as Sleep, or together with Sleep, exhibits the same position of the feet.[36] Maffei too would furnish me with a

[33] Sepulc. Car. xiv. [34] Parte v. p. 22.
[35] Tollii Expos. Signi vet. p. 292.
[36] For instance part iii. p. 69, and perhaps also part v. p. 23.

complete harvest of figures such as appear on the first plate.[37]

But to what end this superfluity? Four such monuments, not reckoning that in Bellori, are more than enough to obviate the presumption that that could be a



(iv.)—Sepulchral Monument. (From Boissard.)

mere insignificant accident which is capable of such a deep meaning. At least such an accident would be the most extraordinary that can be imagined! What a coincidence, if certain things were accidentally thus on more than one undoubted antique monument, exactly as I have said that according to my reading of a certain

[37] Museo Veron. tab. cxxxix.

passage, they must be; or if it were a mere accident that this passage could be so construed as if it had been written with a real view to such monuments. No, chance is not so consistent, and I may maintain without vanity, that consequently my explanation, although it is only *my* explanation, little as may be the credit attaching to it merely on my authority, is yet as completely proved as ever anything of this nature can be proved.

Consequently I think it is hardly worth while to clear away this or that trifle which might perhaps occur to a sceptic who will not cease doubting. For instance the lines of Tibullus:—[38]

> "Postque venit tacitus fuscis circumdatus alis
> Somnus et incerto somnia vara pede."

It is true that express mention is here made of Dreams with crooked legs. But Dreams! And if the legs of Dreams were crooked why must Sleep's needs be the same? Because he is the father of Dreams? An excellent reason! And yet that is not the only answer that here occurs to me. For the real one is this: the adjective *vara* is certainly not Tibullus's own, it is nothing but an arbitrary reading of Brouckhuysen's. Before this commentator all editions read either *nigra* or *vana*. The latter is the true one, and Brouckhuysen can only have been misled to reject it by the facility of foisting a foreign idea upon his author by altering a single letter. For if the ancient poets often represent Dreams as tottering upon weak uncertain feet, namely deceptive, false dreams; does it follow thence that they must have conceived of these weak uncertain feet as crooked? Why must weak feet needs be crooked, or crooked feet, weak? Moreover the ancients did not regard all dreams as false and deceptive, they believed in a species of very veracious dreams, and Sleep with these, his children, was to them *Futuri certus* as well as *pessimus auctor*.[39] Consequently crooked feet, as the symbol of uncertainty, could not in their apprehension belong to Dreams in general, still less to Sleep, as the universal father of Dreams. And yet I admit all these petty reasons

[38] Lib. ii. Eleg. i. v. 89, 90. [39] Seneca Herc. Furens, v. 1070.

might be pushed aside if Brouckhuysen, beside the misunderstood passage of Pausanias, had been able to indicate a single one in favour of the crooked feet of Dreams and Sleep. He explains the meaning of *varus* with twenty superfluous passages, but to prove *varus* an epithet of dreams, he adduces no example, but has to make one, and as I have said, not even the single one of Pausanias gives it but it is made out from a false rendering of Pausanias. It is almost ludicrous, when, since he cannot find a bandy-legged Sleep, he tries to show us at least a genius with crooked feet in a passage of Persius,[40] where *genius* means nothing but *indoles* and *varus*, hence nothing more than standing apart.

". Geminos, horoscope, varo
Producis genio"

This digression concerning the διεστραμμένους of Pausanias would have been far too long had it not afforded me an opportunity of bringing forward at the same time various antique representations of Death. For let it be as it may with the crossed feet of Death and his brother; may they be held as characteristic or no; so much is unquestionable from the monuments I have adduced, that the ancient artists always continued to fashion Death with an exact resemblance to Sleep, and it was only that which I wanted to prove here.

For, completely as I myself am convinced of the characteristic element that is contained in this attitude of the feet, I will not therefore insist that no image of Sleep or Death can be without it. On the contrary I can easily conceive an instance in which such an attitude could be at variance with the meaning of the whole and I think I can show examples of such instances. If namely one foot crossing the other is a sign of repose, it can then only duly belong to death that has already taken place; death on the other hand that has still to occur will for that very reason demand another attitude.

In such another attitude, announcing its approach, I think that I recognise Death on a gem in Stephanonius

[40] Sat. vi. v. 18.

or Licetus.[41] A winged genius who holds in one hand a cinerary urn, seems to be extinguishing with the other a reversed but yet burning torch, and looks aside mournfully at a butterfly creeping on the ground. The outstretched legs are either to show him in the act of advancing, or denote the posture involuntarily assumed by the body when about to throw back one arm with violence. I do not like to detain myself with a refutation of the highly forced explanation which both the first poetical interpreter of the Stephanonian gem and the hieroglyphical Licetus gave of this representation. They are both founded on the assumption that a winged boy must needs be an Amor, and as they contradict each other, so they both fall to the ground as soon as the foundation of this assumption is examined. This genius is therefore neither Amor who preserves the memory of departed friends in a faithful heart; nor Amor who renounces love out of vexation because he can find no requital; he is nothing but Death and even approaching Death, in the act of extinguishing his torch, upon which, when extinguished, we have already seen him leaning.

I have always been reminded of this gesture of extinguishing the torch, as an allegory of approaching death, as often as the so-called brothers, Castor and Pollux, in the Villa Ludovici have been brought before my eyes.[42] That they are not Castor and Pollux has been evident to many scholars, but I doubt whether Del Torre or Maffei has therefore come any nearer the truth. They are two undraped, very similar genii, both in a gently melancholy attitude, the one embraces the shoulder of the other, who holds a torch in each hand; the one in his right, which he seems to have taken from his playfellow, he is about to extinguish upon an altar that stands between them, while the other in his left, he has dashed over his shoulder to extinguish it with violence; behind them stands a smaller female figure, not unlike an Isis. Del Torre saw in this group two figures worshipping Isis; while Maffei preferred to regard them as Lucifer and Hesperus. Good as the reasons may be which Maffei brings against the ex-

[41] Schemata, vii. p. 123. [See p. 178 above.] [42] Maffei, tab. cxxi.

planation of Del Torre, his own idea is equally unhappy. Whence can Maffei prove to us that the ancients represented Lucifer and Hesperus as two distinct beings? They were to them only two names for the same star and for the same mythical personage.[43] Pity that one should venture to guess the most intimate thoughts of antiquity and not know such generally familiar matters! But the more needful must it be to excogitate a new explanation of this excellent work of art; and if I suggest Death and Sleep, I desire to do nothing more than to suggest them. It is palpable that their attitudes are not those of sacrificers; and if one of the torches is to light the sacrifice what means the other in the background? That one figure extinguishes both torches at once, would be very significant according to my conjecture, for in reality Death makes an end to both waking and sleeping. And then, according to this theory the diminutive female figure might not unjustly be interpreted as Night, as the mother of Sleep and Death. For if the kalathus on the head of an Isis or Cybele makes her recognisable as the mother of all things, I should not be astonished to see here Night—

θεῶν γενέτειρα—ἥ δε καὶ ἀνδρῶν,

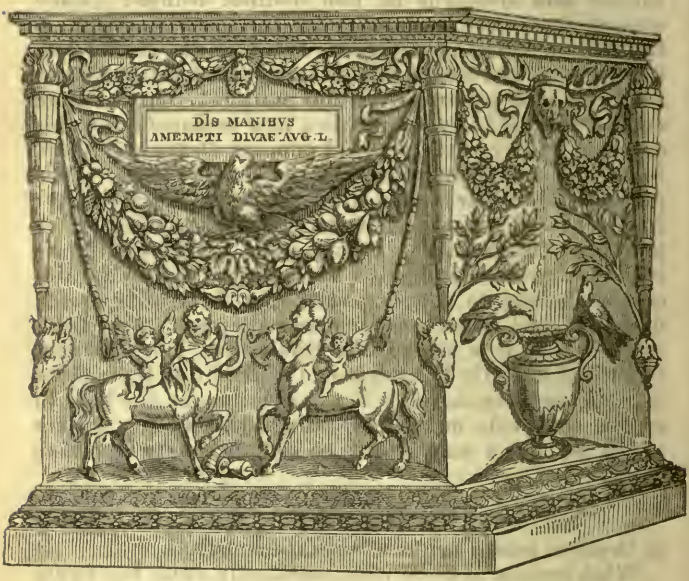
as Orpheus names her, also with the kalathus.

What besides appears most manifestly from the figure of Stephanonius combined with that of Bellori, is this, that the cinerary urn, the butterfly, and the wreath are those attributes by which Death was distinguished from his counterpart Sleep, where and when this was needful. The particular mark of Sleep was on the other hand unquestionably a horn.

Some light might be thrown on this by quite another representation on the gravestone of a certain Amemptus, a freed-man of I know not what empress or imperial princess.[44] See the accompanying plate [p. 202]. A male and female Centaur, the first playing on a lyre, the other blowing a double tibia, each bearing a winged boy on

[43] Hyginus, Poet. Astr. lib. ii. cap. 42.
[44] Boissardus, par. iii. p. 144.

its back, of whom each is blowing a flute; under the upraised foot of the one Centaur lies an urn, under that



Monumental Stone. (From Boissard.)

of the other a horn. What can this allegory import? What was it to mean here? A man like Herr Klotz, it is true, whose head is full of love-gods, would soon be ready with his answer. These are a pair of Cupids, he would say, and the wise artist has here again shown the triumph of love over the most untamable creatures, a triumph effected by music. Well, well, what could have been more worthy of the wisdom of the ancient artists than ever to dally with love, especially in the way that these gentlemen knew love? Meanwhile it still could be possible that even an ancient artist, to speak after their manner, sacrificed less to love and the graces and was in this instance a hundred miles away from thinking of love! It might be possible

that what to their eyes resembles Amor as one drop of water the other, is nothing more playful than Sleep and Death.

In the guise of winged boys the two are no longer strange to us, and the vase on the side of the one and the horn beside the other seem to me not much less expressive than their actual written names would be. I know well that the vase and the horn might only be drinking vessels, and that in antiquity the Centaurs were no mean topers, wherefore on various works they appear in the train of Bacchus and even draw his car.[45] But why in this capacity did they require to be indicated by attributes? and is it not far more in keeping with the place to explain this vase, this horn as the attributes of Sleep and Death which they had of necessity to throw aside in order to manage their flutes?

If however I name the vase or urn as the attribute of Death, I do not mean thereby the actual cinerary urn, the *Ossuarium* or *Cinerarium*, or however else the vase was called in which the remains of the cremated bodies were preserved. I include under it also the λήκυθοι, the vessels of every kind that were placed in the earth with the dead bodies that were buried entire, without entering upon the question what may have been contained in these bottles. A corpse about to be buried among the Greeks was as little left without such a vessel as without a wreath, which is very clearly shown in various passages of Aristophanes among others,[46] so that it is quite intelligible how both became attributes of Death.

There is still less doubt regarding the horn as an attri-

[45] Gemme antiche colle sposizioni di P. A. Maffei, parte iii. p. 58.

[46] Especially in the Ecclesiazusæ, where Blepyrus scolds his Praxagora for having got up secretly at night and gone out in his clothes (l. 537–8)—

> ἄχου καταλιποῦσ' ὥσπερεὶ προκείμενον,
> Μόνον οὐ στεφανώσασ', οὐδ' ἐπιθεῖσα λήκυθον.

The scholiast adds thereto: Εἰώθασι γὰρ ἐπὶ νεκρῶν τοῦτο ποιεῖν. Compare in the same play the lines 1022–27, where the Greek funeral customs are to be found together. That such vessels (λήκυθοι) which were placed beside the dead, were painted, and that it was not precisely the great masters who occupied themselves with this branch of the art is clear from lines 987–88. Tanaquil Faber seems to have

bute of Sleep. The poets refer to this horn in innumerable passages. Out of a full horn he pours his blessing over the eyelids of the weary—

> "Illos post vulnera fessos
> Exceptamque hiemem, cornu perfuderat omni
> Somnus;"

with an emptied horn he follows departing Night into his grotto—

> "Et Nox, et cornu fugiebat Somnus inani."

And as the poets beheld him the artists depicted him.[47] Only the double horn, wherewith the extravagant imagination of Romeyn de Hooghe has overburdened him, is known neither by the one nor the other.[48]

Granted therefore that it might be Sleep and Death who here sit on the Centaurs, what would be the meaning of their combined representation? If I have happily guessed a part, must I therefore be able to explain the whole? Perhaps however the secret is not very profound. Perhaps Amemptus was a musician especially skilled in the instruments we here behold in the hands of these subterranean beings; for Centaurs also had their abode at the gates of Hades according to the later poets—

> "Centauri in foribus stabulant"

—and it was quite common to place on the monument of an artist the implements of his art, which here would not have been devoid of a delicate complimentary significance.

believed that they were not really painted vessels that were buried with the dead, but that such vessels were painted round about them, for he notes at the last place: "Quod autem lecythi mortuis appingerentur, aliunde ex Aristophane innotuit." I wish he would have given his reference for this *aliunde*.

[47] Servius ad Æneid. vi. v. 233: "Somnum cum cornu novimus pingi. Lutatius apud Barthium ad Thebaid. vi. v. 27. Nam sic a pictoribus simulatur, ut liquidum somnium ex cornu super dormientes videatur effundere."

[48] Denkbilder der alten Völker, p. 193, German translation.

I cannot however express myself otherwise than hesitatingly concerning this monument in general. For I see myself once again perplexed as to how far Boissard may be relied upon. The drawing is Boissard's, but before him Smetius had published the inscription with an additional line,[49] and had appended a verbal description of the figures surrounding it. Smetius says of the principal figures: "Inferius Centauri duo sunt, alter mas, lyncea instratus, lyram tangens, cui Genius alatus, fistula, Germanicæ modernæ simili, canens insidet; alter fœmina, fistulis duabus simul in os insertis canens, cui alter Genius fœmineus alis papilionum, manibus nescio quid concutiens, insidet. Inter utrumque cantharus et cornu Bacchicum projecta jacent." All is exact, except the genius borne by the female Centaur. According to Smetius this one should also be of female sex, and have butterfly wings and strike something together with her hands. According to Boissard this figure is no more winged than its companion, and instead of cymbals or perhaps of a Crotalum, he plays upon the same kind of wind instrument as the other. It is sad to notice such contradictions so often. They must from time to time make antiquarian studies very repugnant to a man who does not willingly build on quicksand.

Nevertheless even if Smetius saw more correctly than Boissard, I should not therefore wholly abandon my explanation. For then the female genius with butterfly wings would be a Psyche, and if Psyche is the picture of the soul, then we must here see instead of Death the soul of the dead. To this also the attribute of the urn would be appropriate, and the attribute of the horn would still indicate Sleep.

I imagine moreover that I have discovered Sleep elsewhere than on sepulchral monuments, and especially in a company where one would scarcely have expected to find him. Among the train of Bacchus, namely, there appears not rarely a boy or genius with a cornucopia, and I do not know that any one has as yet thought it worth

[49] Which names those who erected this monument to Amemptus, LALVS ET CORINTHVS. L. V. Gruteri Corp. Inscr. p. dcvi. edit. Græo.

his while to identify this figure. It is, for instance, on the well-known gem of Baggaris, now in the collection of the King of France, the explanation of which Casaubon first gave, and it was noticed by him and all subsequent commentators,[50] but not one of them knew what to say of it beyond what is obvious to the eye, and a genius with a cornucopia has remained a genius with a cornucopia. I venture to pronounce him to be Sleep. For as has been proved, Sleep is a diminutive genius, the attribute of Sleep is a horn, and what companion could an intoxicated Bacchus desire rather than Sleep? That it was usual for the ancient artists to couple Bacchus with Sleep, is shown by the pictures of Sleep with which Statius decked his palace.[51]

"Mille intus simulacra dei cælaverat ardens,
Mulciber. Hic hæret lateri redimita voluptas,
Hic comes in requiem vergens labor. Est ubi Baccho,
Est ubi Martigenæ socium pulvinar amori
Obtinet. Interius tectum in penetralibus altis,
Et cum Morte jacet: nullique ea tristis imago."[52]

Nay, if an ancient inscription may be trusted, or rather if this inscription is ancient enough, Bacchus and Sleep were even worshipped in common as the two greatest and sweetest sustainers of human life.

It is not in place here to pursue this trace more keenly. Neither is the present occasion opportune for treating more amply my special theme and seeking far and wide for further proofs of the ancients having depicted Death as Sleep, and Sleep as Death, now alone, now together, now with, now without certain attributes. Those instanced, even if others could not be hunted out, sufficiently confirm what they are designed to confirm, and I may pass on without scruple to the second point which contains the refutation of the one single counter-proposition.

[50] See Lippert's Dakt. i. 366.

[51] Thebaid. xv. 100. Barth need not have been so chary as to omit commenting on these lines because they are omitted in some of the best MSS. He has spent his learning on worse verses.

[52] Corp. Inscript. p. lxvii. 8.

II. I say: the ancient artists, when they represented a skeleton, meant thereby something quite different from Death, as the deity of Death. I prove therefore (1) that they did not thereby mean Death, and show (2) what they did mean.

1. It never occurred to me to deny that they represented skeletons. According to Herr Klotz's words I must have denied it, and denied it for the reason that they refrained in general from portraying ugly or disagreeable objects. For he says, I should beyond question resolve the examples thereof on engraved gems into allegory, which thus relieves them from the higher law of beauty. If I needed to do this, I need only add, that the figures on gravestones and cinerary urns belong no less to allegory, and thus of all his cited examples there would only remain the two brazen figures in the Kircherian Museum and the gallery at Florence, which can really not be reckoned among works of art as I understand that term in the 'Laokoon.'

But wherefore these civilities towards him? As far as he is concerned I need simply deny the faults of which he accuses me. I have nowhere said that the ancient artists represented no skeletons, I only said that they did not depict Death as a skeleton. It is true, I thought that I might doubt the genuine antiquity of the bronze skeleton at Florence; but I added: "It cannot at any rate be meant to represent Death because the ancients depicted him differently." Herr Klotz withholds this additional sentence from his readers, and yet everything depends upon it. For it shows that I will not exactly deny that of which I doubt. It shows that my meaning has only been this: if the image in question is to represent Death, as Spence maintains, it is not antique, and if it is antique, then it does not represent Death.

I was already acquainted with several skeletons on antique works and now I know of several more than the luckless industry or the boastful indolence of Herr Klotz has been able to produce.

For in fact those which he cites, all except one, are already to be found in Winckelmann [53] and that he here

[53] Allegorie, p. 81.

only copied from him is apparent from an error common to them both. Winckelmann writes: "I here note that skeletons are only extant on two ancient monuments and urns of marble in Rome, the one is in the Villa Medici, the other in the Museo of the Collegio Romano. Another with a skeleton is to be found in Spon, but is no longer in Rome." He refers to Spon concerning the former of those skeletons which still stands in the Villa Medici (Spon, *Rech. d'Antiq.* p. 93) and concerning the third, which is no longer extant in Rome, to the same scholar's *Miscell. Ant.* p. 7. Now this and that with Spon are one and the same, and if that which Spon cites in his *Recherches* still stands in the Villa Medici, then that in his *Miscellanées* is certainly also still in Rome and is to be seen in the same villa on the same spot. Spon however, I must remark, did not see it in the Villa Medici, but in the Villa Madama.

As little therefore as Winckelmann can have compared the two quotations from Spon, as little has Herr Klotz done so, else he would not have referred me, to excess, as he says, to the two marbles quoted by Winckelmann in his essay on allegory and immediately after have also named the monument in Spon. One of these is, as I have said, counted twice over, and this he must permit me to deduct.

In order however that he may not be annoyed at this subtraction, I will at once place half a dozen other skeletons at his service in lieu of the one I have taken away. It is game that I myself do not preserve, that has only accidentally strayed into my domains, and with which I am consequently very liberal. To begin with, I have the honour to bring before him three all together. They are upon a stone from the Daktyliotheca of Andreini in Florence to be found in Gori.[54] The fourth this same Gori will exhibit to him on an old marble likewise in Florence.[55] The fifth he will encounter, if my information is not at fault, in Fabretti,[55] and the sixth upon the

[54] Inscript. antiq. quæ in Etruriæ urbibus exstant, par. i. p. 455.

[55] *Ibid.* p. 382: "Tabula, in qua sub titulo sculptum est canistrum, binæ corollæ, fœmina cornu mensa tripode in lectisternio decumbens, Pluto quadriga vectus animam rapiens, præeunte Mercurio petasato et caduceato, qui rotundam domum intrat, prope quam jacet scelctus."

[56] Inscript. cap. i. n. 17, quoted by Gori from the above.

second of the two gems of Stosch of which he only brings forward one out of Lippert's [57] impressions.

What a wretched study is the study of antiquity if its subtlety depends on such knowledge; when the most learned therein is he who can most easily and exhaustively count up such trivialities on his fingers!

But it seems to me it has a more dignified side, this study. A dealer in antiquities is one thing, an archæologist another! The former has inherited the fragments, the latter the spirit of antiquity. The former scarcely thinks with his eyes; the latter sees even with his thoughts. Before the former can say "Thus it was," the latter already knows whether it could be so.

The former may pile together yet seventy and seven more such artistic skeletons out of his rubbish heap, to prove that the ancients represented Death as a skeleton; the latter will shrug his shoulders at this short-sighted industry and will continue to say what he said before he knew all this baggage; either they are not as old as they are thought to be, or they are not that which they are proclaimed.

Putting the question of age aside as not decided or as not capable of decision, what reason have we for saying that these skeletons represent Death?

Because we moderns represent Death as a skeleton? We moderns still in part depict Bacchus as fat and paunchy. Was this therefore also the representation which the ancients gave of him? If a bas-relief were found of the birth of Hercules and we saw a woman with folded hands, *digitis pectinatim inter se implexis* sitting before a door, should we perhaps say this woman is praying to Juno Lucina that she may aid Alkmene to a quick and happy deliverance? But do not we pray in this manner? This reasoning is so wretched that one feels ashamed to attribute it to any one. Moreover too the moderns do not portray Death as a mere skeleton; they give him a scythe or something of the kind in his hand, and this scythe it is that converts the skeleton into Death.

If we are to believe that the ancient skeletons represented Death, we must be convinced, either by the repre-

[57] Descript. des Pierres gr. p. 517, n. 241.

sentation itself or by the express testimony of ancient writers. But neither the one nor the other are forthcoming. Not even the faintest, the most indirect testimony can be adduced for this.

I call indirect testimonies the references and pictures of the poets. Where is there the faintest trace in any Greek or Roman poet which could ever allow us to suspect that he found Death represented as a skeleton or so thought of it himself?

Pictures of Death are frequent among the poets and often very terrible. He is the pale, pallid, sallow Death;[58] he roams abroad on black wings;[59] he bears a sword;[60] he gnashes hungry teeth;[61] he suddenly opens a voracious jaw;[62] he has bloody nails with which he indicates his destined prey;[63] his form is so large and monstrous that he overshadows a whole battlefield,[64] that he hurries off with entire cities.[65] But where in all this is there even a suspicion of a skeleton? In one of Euripides' tragedies he is even introduced among the acting personages; and there too he is the sad, terrible, inexorable Death. Yet even there he is far removed from appearing as a skeleton, although we know that the mechanism of the ancient stage did not hesitate to terrify the spectators with yet more horrible figures. There is no apparent trace of his being indicated otherwise than by his black vesture,[66] and by the steel with which he cut off the hair of the dying, thus dedicating them to the infernal gods.[67] Perhaps he may have had wings.[68]

[58] "Pallida, lurida Mors."

[59] "Atris circumvolat alis," Horat. Sat. ii. i. v. 58.

[60] "Fila sororum ense metit," Statius, Theb. i. v. 633.

[61] "Mors avidis pallida dentibus," Seneca, Her. Fur.

[62] "Avidos oris hiatus pandit," Idem, Œdipo.

[63] "Præcipuos annis animisque cruento ungue notat," Statius, Theb. viii. v. 380.

[64] "Fruitur cœlo, bellatoremque volando campum operit," *Ibid.* viii. v. 378.

[65] "Captam tenens fert manibus urbem," *Ibid.* lib. i. v. 633.

[66] Alcest. v. 843, where Hercules names him Ἄνακτα τὸν μελάμπεπλον νεκρῶν.

[67] *Ibid.* v. 75, 76, where he says of himself—

ἱερὸς γὰρ οὗτος τῶν κατὰ χθονὸς θεῶν,
ὅτου τόδ' ἔγγυς κράτος ἀγνίσει τρίχα.

[68] If the πτέρωτος ᾄδας in the 261st line is to be understood of him.

But may not some of these shots recoil on myself? If it be admitted to me that in the pictures of the poets nothing is seen of this skelcton; must I not in return admit that they are nevertheless far too terrible to exist together with that image of Death which I believe that I have discovered among the ancient artists? If a conclusion drawn from that which is not to be found in the poet's pictures be valid for the material pictures of art; will not a similar conclusion drawn from that which is found in these pictures be valid also?

I answer, No; this conclusion is not as entirely valid in this case as in the other. Poetical pictures are of immeasurably wider range than the pictures of art: and especially in the personification of an abstract idea, art can only express that which is general and essential to it. It must renounce all the accidents which would form exceptions to this universality, which stand in opposition to this essential quality, for such accidents in the thing itself would make the thing itself unrecognisable, and to be recognised is its aim above all things. The poet, on the contrary, who elevates their personified abstract idea into the class of acting personages, can allow him to act up to a certain point contrary to this idea and can introduce him in all the modifications that any especial case offers, without our losing sight in the least of his actual nature.

Hence, if art wishes to make the personified idea of Death recognisable by us, by what must she, by what else can she do so, than by that which is common to Death in all possible cases? And what else is this but the condition of repose and insensibility? The more she would desire to express contingencies which in a single case might banish the idea of this rest and insensibility, the more unrecognisable her picture must necessarily become, unless she resorts to the addition of some word, or some conventional sign, which is no better than a word and will thus cease to be pictorial art. The poet need not fear this. For him language has already elevated abstract ideas to the rank of independent beings, and the same word never ceases to awaken the same idea, however many contradictory contingencies he may unite with it. He may describe Death as never so painful, so terrible, so

cruel, we do not therefore forget that it is only Death, and that such a horrible shape does not belong to him essentially, but only under similar circumstances.

The condition of being dead has nothing terrible, and in so far as dying is merely the passage to being dead, dying can have nothing terrible. Only to die thus and thus, at this moment, in this mood, according to the will of this or that person, to die with shame and agony, may be terrible and becomes terrible. But is it then the dying, is it Death, which has caused the terror? Nothing less; Death is the desired end of all these horrors, and it is only to be imputed to the poverty of language if it calls both conditions, the condition which leads unavoidably to Death, and the condition of Death itself, by one and the same name. I know that this poverty can often become a source of pathos and that the poets thus derive advantage from it, but still that language unquestionably merits the preference that despises a pathos which is founded on the confusion of such diverse matters, and which itself obviates such confusion by distinctive appellations. Such a language it appears was the ancient Greek, the language of Homer. Κήρ is one thing to Homer and θάνατος another; for he would not so frequently have combined θάνατος and κήρ if both were meant to express only one and the same thing. By κήρ he understands the necessity of dying, what may often be a sad, an early, violent, shameful, inopportune death; by θάνατος natural death, which is preceded by no κήρ, or the condition of being dead without any reference to the preceding κήρ.

The Romans too made a distinction between *lethum* and *mors*.

> "Emergit late Ditis chorus, horrida Erinnys,
> Et Bellona minax, facibusque armata Megæra,
> Lethumque, Insidiæque, et lurida Mortis imago"

—says Petronius. Spence thinks it is difficult to understand this distinction; but that perhaps by *lethum* they understood the general principle or the source of mortality, which they supposed to have its proper residence in Hell, and by *mors* or *mortes* the immediate cause of each particular instance of mortality

on our earth.[69] I, for my part, would sooner take that *lethum* is to denote rather the manner of dying, and *mors* Death originally and in general, for Statius says:[70]

"Mille modis lethi miseros Mors una fatigat."

The modes of dying are endless; but there is only one Death. Consequently *lethum* would completely answer to the Greek κήρ, and *mors* to θάνατος, without prejudice to the fact that in the one language as well as in the other, the two words became confounded in time and were finally employed as entirely synonymous.

However I will here also imagine to myself an opponent who contests every step of the field. Such a one might say: "I will allow the distinction between κήρ and θάνατος, but if the poets, if language itself have distinguished between a terrible death and one that is not terrible, why then may not Art be permitted to have a similar double image for Death? The less terrible image may have been the genius who rests on his reversed torch, with his various attributes; and consequently this genius was a θάνατος. How stands it with the image of Κήρ? If this had to be terrible, then perhaps it was a skeleton, and we should then still be permitted to say, that the ancients represented Death, *i.e.* violent death, for which our language lacks a name, by means of a skeleton.

It is certainly true that the ancient artists also accepted the abstraction of Death from the terrors that precede it and represented the latter under the especial image of Κήρ. But how could they have chosen for their representation something which only ensues long after death? A skeleton would have been as unsuitable for this as possible. Whosoever is not satisfied with this reasoning, let him look at the fact. Fortunately Pausanias has

[69] Polymetis, p. 261: "The Roman poets sometimes make a distinction between Lethum and Mors, which the poverty of our language will not allow us to express. Perhaps he meant by Lethum, that general principle or source of mortality, which they supposed to have its proper residence in hell; and by Mors, or Mortes (for they had several of them) the immediate cause of each particular instance of mortality on our earth."

[70] Thebaid. ix. v. 280.

preserved for us the image under which this Κήρ was depicted. It appeared as a woman with horrible teeth and crooked nails, like to a wild beast Thus was she represented upon the cist of Kypselus on which Death and Sleep rested in the arms of Night, behind Polyneikes when his brother Eteokles attacks him. τοῦ Πολυνείκους δὲ ὄπισθεν ἕστηκεν ὀδόντας τε ἔχουσα οὐδὲν ἡμερωτέρους θηρίου, καὶ οἱ καὶ τῶν χειρων εἰσὶν ἐπικαμπεῖς οἱ ὄνυχες· ἐπίγραμμά δε ἐπ' αὐτῇ εἶναί φασι Κῆρα.[71] A substantive seems wanting in the text before ἕστηκεν, but it would be a mere quibble if we affected to doubt that it must be γυνή. Anyway it cannot be σκελετός, and that is enough for me.

Herr Klotz has already once before wanted to employ this image of Κήρ against my assertion as to the manner in which Death was depicted by the ancients,[72] and now he knows what I could have replied to him. Κήρ is not Death, and it is mere poverty in those languages where it has to pass for it by a circumlocution and with the addition of the word Death. So distinct an idea ought to have a word for itself in all languages. And yet Herr Klotz should not have praised Kulmius for translating κήρ by *mors fatalis*. It would be more correct and exact to say *fatum mortale*, *mortiferum*, for in Suidas κήρ is explained by θανατηφόρος μοῖρα, not by θάνατος πεπρωμένος.

Finally I will remind my readers of the euphemisms of the ancients and their delicacy in exchanging such words as might immediately awaken disagreeable, sad, horrible ideas for less shocking ones. If in consequence of this euphemism they did not distinctly say "he is dead" but rather "he has lived, he has been, he has gone to the majority"[73] and such like; if one of the reasons of this delicacy consisted in avoiding as far as might be words of evil omen; then there can be no doubt that the artists too

[71] Lib. v. cap. 19, p. 425, ed. Kuhn.

[72] Ad Litt. vol. iii. p. 288: "Considerem quasdam figuras arcæ Cypseli in templo Olympico insculptas. Inter eas apparet γυνὴ ὀδόντας, κ.τ.λ. Verbum κῆρα recto explicat Kulmius mortem fatalem eoque loco refutari posse videtur Auctoris opinio de minus terribili forma morti ab antiquis tributa, cui sententiæ etiam alia monimenta adversari videntur."

[73] Gattakerus, de novi Instrumenti stylo, cap. xix. [London, 1648].

would tone down their language to this gentler pitch. They too would not have presented Death under an image unavoidably calling up before the beholder loathsome ideas of decay and corruption, the image of the ugly skeleton; for in their compositions too the unexpected sight of such an image could have become as ominous as the unexpected hearing of the actual word. They too therefore will rather have chosen an image, which leads us to that of which it is emblematic by an agreeable by-path; and what image could be more suited to this, than that whose symbolic expression language itself likes to employ as the designation of Death, the image of Sleep?

"Nullique ea tristis imago."

But euphemism does not banish words from a language, does not necessarily thrust them out of usage because it exchanges them for gentler ones. It rather employs these repulsive and therefore avoided words, instead of the less offensive ones, on a more terrible occasion. Thus, for example, it says of him who died quietly, that he no longer lives, so it would say of him who had been murdered under the most horrible tortures, that he had died; and in like manner, Art will not wholly banish from her domain those images by which she might indicate Death but which on account of their horrors she does not willingly employ, but will rather reserve them for such occasions in which they are the more appropriate, or even the only serviceable ones.

Therefore, since it is proved that the ancients did not represent Death by a skeleton; and since nevertheless skeletons are to be seen on ancient monuments; what are they then, these skeletons?

Without circumlocution these skeletons are *Larvæ;* and that not inasmuch as *Larva* itself means nothing else but a skeleton, but inasmuch as under *Larvæ* a kind of departed souls was understood.

The ordinary pneumatology of the ancients was as follows. Besides the gods, they believed in an innumerable race of created spirits, whom they named Dæmons. Among these Dæmons they also reckoned the departed souls of men, which they comprehended under the general name of *Lemures* and of which there could not well be

otherwise than two kinds; departed souls of good and of bad men. The good became peaceful, blissful household gods for their posterity and were named *Lares*. The bad, in punishment of their crimes, wandered like restless fugitives about the earth, an empty terror to the pious, a blighting terror to the impious, and were named *Larvæ*. In the uncertainty whether a departed soul were of the first or second kind, the word *Manes*[74] was employed.

And I say, that such *Larvæ*, such departed souls of bad men were represented as skeletons. I am convinced that this remark is new from the point of view of art and has not been used by any archæologist in explanation of ancient monuments. People will therefore require to see it proved, and it might not be sufficient if I referred to a commentary of Herr Stephanus, according to which in an old epigram οἱ σκελετοί is to be explained by *Manes*. But what this commentary only lets us guess, the following words will place beyond doubt. Seneca says:[75] "Nemo tam puer est, ut Cerberum timeat, et tenebras, et Larvarum habitum nudis ossibus cohærentium;" or as our old honest and thoroughly German Michael Herr translated: "Es ist niemands so kindisch, der den Cerberus förcht, die Finsterniss und die todten Gespenst, da nichts dann die leidigen Bein an einander hangen"[76] ("No one is so childish as to fear Cerberus, darkness and dead spectres hanging together by nothing but bare bones"). How could a

[74] Apuleius, de Deo Socratis (p. 110, edit. Bas. per Hen. Petri): "Est et secundo signatu species dæmonum, animus humanus exutus et liber, stipendiis vitæ corpore suo abjuratis. Hunc vetere Latina lingua reperio Lemurem dictitatum. Ex hisce ergo Lemuribus, qui posterorum suorum curam sortitus, pacato et quieto numine domum possidet. Lar dicitur familiaris. Qui vero propter adversa vitæ merita, nullis bonis sedibus incerta vagatione, ceu quodam exilio punitur, inane terriculamentum bonis hominibus, cæterum noxium malis, hunc plerique Larvam perhibent. Cum vero incertum est quæ cuique sortitio evenerit, utrum Lar sit an Larva, nomine Manium deum nuncupant, et honoris gratia Dei vocabulum additum est."

[75] Epist. xxiv.

[76] Sittliche Zuchtbücher des hochberühmten Philosophen Seneca, Strasburg 1536, in folio. A later translator of Seneca, Conrad Fuchs (Frankfort 1620) renders the words "et Larvarum habitum nudis ossibus cohærentium" by "und der Todten gebeinichte Companey." Very elegant and mad!

skeleton, a framework, be more distinctly indicated, than by *nudis ossibus cohærens?* How could it be more emphatically expressed that the ancients were accustomed to conceive and to figure their haunting spirits as skeletons?

If such an observation affords a more natural explanation for misunderstood representations, this is unquestionably a new proof of their justice. Only a single skeleton on an ancient monument might certainly be Death if it had not been proved on other grounds that he was not so depicted. But how, when many such skeletons appear? May we say that, even as the poet knew various Deaths—

"Stant Furiæ circum, variæque ex ordine Mortes"

—so it must also be permitted to the artist to represent various forms of death as a separate Death? And if even then no sound sense can be made of such a composition consisting of various skeletons? I have referred above to a stone in Gori[77] on which three skeletons are to be seen; the one drives on a biga drawn by fierce animals, over another prostrate on the ground, and threatens to drive over a third that stands in its way. Gori calls this representation the triumph of Death over Death. Words without sense. But happily this gem is of bad workmanship and filled up with characters intended to pass for Greek, but which make no sense. Gori therefore pronounces it the work of a Gnostic, and people have taken leave from all time to lay as many absurdities as they do not care to explain to their account. Instead of seeing Death triumphing over himself, or over a few rivals envious of his dominion, I see nothing but departed souls, in the form of *Larvæ*, who still cling in the other life to those occupations which were so pleasant to them in this. That this was the case was a commonly received opinion with the ancients, and Virgil has not forgotten the love of racing among the examples he gives of this[78]

"——quæ gratia currûm
Armorumque fuit vivis, quæ cura nitentes
Pascere equos, eadem sequitur tellure repostos."

[77] See above, p. 208. [78] Æneid, vi. v. 653.

Therefore nothing is more common on monuments and urns and sarcophagi than genii, who exercise—

"——aliquas artes, antiquæ irritamina vitæ,"

and in the very work of Gori, in which he adduces this gem, a marble occurs of which the gem might be almost called the caricature. The skeletons that on the gem drive and are driven over, are, on the marble, genii.

Now if the ancients did not conceive of the *Larvæ*, *i.e.* the departed souls of wicked men otherwise than as skeletons, then it was quite natural that finally every skeleton, even if it was only a work of art, should be called *Larva*. Hence *Larva* was also the name of that skeleton which appeared at solemn banquets, to stimulate a more hasty enjoyment of life. The passage in Petronius concerning such a skeleton is well known,[79] but the conclusion it might be sought to deduce, that it is a representation of Death, would be very precipitate. Because a skeleton reminded the ancients of Death, was a skeleton therefore the received image of Death? The saying which Trimalcus utters rather distinguishes expressly the skeleton and Death:

"Sic erimus cuncti, postquam nos auferet Orcus."

That does not mean, "This one will soon carry us off," "In this form Death will claim us," but "This is what we must all become, and skeletons we shall all be when Death has claimed us."

And thus I think that I have proved in all ways what I promised to prove. But I still wish to show that I have not taken this trouble only against Herr Klotz. To put Herr Klotz alone right might seem to most readers an equally

[79] "Potentibus ergo, et accuratissimas nobis lautitias mirantibus, larvam argenteam attulit servus sic aptatam, ut articuli ejus vertebræque laxatæ in omnem partem verterentur. Hanc quum super mensam semel iterumque abjecisset, et catenatio mobilis aliquot figuras exprimeret Trimalcio adjecit—

Heu, heu, nos miseros, quam totus homuncio nil est!
Sic erimus cuncti, postquam nos auferet Orcus.
Ergo vivamus, dum licet esse bene."

(Edit. Mich. Hadr. p. 115.)

easy and useless occupation. It is something different if he has gone astray along with the whole flock. Then it is not the hindermost bleating sheep, but the flock that puts the shepherd or his dog in motion.

PROOF.

I WILL therefore glance at better scholars who, as I have said, share more or less in the erroneous imaginations of Herr Klotz, and will commence with a man who is all in all to Herr Klotz, his departed friend, Count Caylus. What lovely souls those must be who at once declare as their friend, one with whom they have exchanged a few compliments at the distance of a hundred miles! It is only a pity that we can just as easily become their enemy!

Among the subjects recommended to artists out of Homer, by Count Caylus, was that of Apollo delivering the purified and embalmed corpse of Sarpedon to Death and Sleep.[80]

The Count says: "It is only vexatious that Homer did not enter upon the attributes that were at his time accorded to Sleep. To designate this god, we only know his actions and we crown him with poppies. These ideas are modern, and the first, which is altogether of minor use, cannot be employed in the present instance, in which even flowers seem to me quite unsuitable, especially for a figure that is to group with Death."[81] I will not repeat here what I have said in the 'Laokoon,' concerning the want of taste of the Count who demands from Homer that he should deck the creatures of his mind with the attributes of the artists. I will only note here how little he himself knew these attributes, and how inexperienced he was in the actual representation of both Death and Sleep. As to the first it is incontrovertibly shown from his words that he believed Death could and must be represented as nothing else but a skeleton. He would not otherwise have observed complete silence concerning its figure, as

[80] Iliad. π. v. 681.

[81] Tableaux tirés de l'Iliade, &c.

on a subject that was self-evident; still less would he have remarked that a figure crowned with flowers could not be well assorted with the figure of Death. This apprehension could only arise from the fact that he had never dreamed of the resemblance of the two figures, having pictured Death to himself as an ugly monster, and Sleep as a gentle genius. Had he known that Death was a like gentle genius, he would surely have reminded his artists of this, and could only have discussed with them, whether it be well to give these allied genii distinctive attributes and which would be the most becoming. But in the second place, he did not even know Sleep as he should have known him. It is rather too much ignorance to say, that except by his action he only indicates this deity by baleful poppies. He indeed justly notes that both these symbols are modern, but he not only does not say what were the old genuine symbols, but he also totally denies that such have been handed down to us. He therefore knew nothing of the horn which the poets so often ascribe to Sleep, and with which he was depicted according to the express testimony of Servius and Lutatius. He knew nothing of the reversed torch; he did not know that a figure with such a reversed torch was extant from ancient times, which was announced as Sleep, not by a mere conjecture, but by its own undoubted superscription. He had not found this figure either in Boissard, or Gruter, or Spanheim, or Beger, or Brouckhuysen,[82] and heard nothing of it in any quarter. Now let us imagine the Homeric picture, as he would have it with a Sleep, as if it was the awakened sleep of Algardi; with a Death, a very little more graceful than he bounds about in old German Death-Dances. What is ancient, Greek, Homeric in this? What is there that is not fanciful, Gothic, and French? Would not this picture of how Homer thought, according to Caylus, bear the same likeness to the original as Hudart's translation? Still it would only be the fault of the

[82] Brouckhuysen has incorporated it in his Tibullus from Spanheim, but Beger, as I should have noted above, p. 192, has made known the whole monument, out of which this single figure is taken. This he has done from the papers of Pighius in his Spicilegium Antiquitatis, p. 106. Beger as little refers to Spanheim. as Spanheim to Beger.

artist's adviser, if he became so offensively and romantically modern, whereas he might be so simple and suggestive, so graceful and great, in the true spirit of antiquity. How he should feel allured to put forth all his powers upon two such advantageous figures as winged genii, to make what is similar different, and what is different similar, alike in growth, form, and mien; yet as unlike in hue and flesh as the general tone of his colouring will allow. For according to Pausanias the one of these twins was black, the other white. I say, the one and the other, because it is not actually clear from the words of Pausanias, which was the white one and which the black. And though I should not marvel if an artist made the black one to be Death, yet I could not therefore assure him that he must be in unquestioned agreement with antiquity. Nonnus, at least, calls Sleep *μελανόχρουν*, when Venus shows herself inclined not to force such a black spouse upon the white Pasithea;[83] and it is quite possible that the ancient artists gave the white hue to Death, thus to indicate that he was not the more terrible Sleep of the two.

Truly, Caylus could learn little if at all better from the well-known iconological works of a Ripa, a Chartarius and however their copyists may be called.

Ripa,[84] it is true, knew the horn of Sleep, but how erroneously he decks him out in other respects! The shorter white tunic over a black dress which he and Chartarius[85] give to him, belongs to Dreams and not to Sleep. Ripa knew the passage in Pausanias concerning the resemblance of Death and Sleep, but without making the least use of this for his picture. He proposes three kinds, and none of these are such as a Greek or Roman would have recognised. Nevertheless only one of them, the invention of Camillo da Ferrara, is a skeleton; but I doubt whether Ripa means to say by this that it was this Camillo who first painted Death as a skeleton. I do not however know this Camillo.

Those who have made most use of Ripa and Chartarius are Giraldus and Natalis Comes.

[83] Lib. xxxiii. v. 40.

[84] Iconolog. p. 464, edit. Rom. 1603.

[85] Imag. Deorum, p. 143, Francof. 1687.

They copied the error about the white and black dress of Sleep from Giraldus,[86] and Giraldus can only have looked at a translation, instead of at Philostratus himself. For it is not Ὕπνος but Ὄνειρος, of whom Philostratus says:[87] ἐν ἀνειμένῳ τῷ εἴδει γέγραπται, καὶ ἐσθῆτα ἔχει λευκὴν ἐπὶ μελαίνῃ τὸ, οἶμαι, νύκτωρ αὐτοῦ καὶ μεθ' ἡμέραν. It is incomprehensible to me how even the latest translator of Philostratus' works, Gottfried Olearius, who assures us that he has given us an almost wholly new rendering, could have been so extremely careless with these words. They run in Latin, with him as: "Ipse somnus remissa pietus est facie, candidamque super nigra vestem habet, eo, ut puto, quod nox sit ipsius, et quæ diem excipiunt."[87] What does this mean: "et quæ diem excipiunt"? Did Olearius not know that μεθ' ἡμέραν means "interdiu," and νύκτωρ "noctu"? It might be said in his defence that one grows weary of purging the old miserable translations. He should then at least not have desired to excuse or refute any one out of an untested translation. But as it further runs, "Cornu is (Somnus) manibus quoque tenet, ut qui insomnia per veram portam inducere solcat," he appends in a note: "Ex hoc vero Philostrati loco patet optimo jure portas illas somni dici posse, qui scilicet somnia per eas inducat, nec necesse esse ut apud Virgilium (Æneid. vi. v. 562) somni dictum intelligamus pro somnii, ut voluit Turnebus" (lib. iv. Advers. c. 14). But Philostratus himself does not speak of the portals of Sleep, Somni, but of Dreams, Somnii, and it is also Ονειρος, not Ὕπνος with him who admits dreams through the true gates. Consequently Virgil can still only be helped otherwise than by Turnebus's commentary, if he absolutely must coincide with Homer in his conception of these gates. Giraldus is entirely silent concerning the form of Death.

Natalis Comes gives to Death a black garment strewn with stars.[88] The black garment, as we saw above, is founded on Euripides, but who put the stars upon it I do not know. He has also dreams *contortis cruribus* and

[86] Hist. Deorum Syntag. ix. p. 311, edit. Jo. Jensii.
[87] Iconum, lib. i. 27.
[88] Mythol. lib. iii. cap. 13.

assures us that Lucian made them roam about thus on his island of Sleep. But with Lucian they are mere shapeless dreams, ἄμορφοι, and the crooked legs are Natalis's own invention. Even according to him these crooked legs would not appertain to dreams in general as an allegorical distinction, but only to certain dreams.

To refer to other mythological compilers would scarcely repay the trouble. Banier alone may seem to merit an exception. But even Banier says nothing of the form of Death, and commits more than one inaccuracy respecting the form of Sleep.[89] For he too mistakes Dream for Sleep in this picture of Philostratus, and sees him there formed as a man, though he thinks that he can determine from the passage of Pausanias that he was represented as a child, and only as a child. He also copies a gross error from Montfaucon, which has been already condemned by Winckelmann and which should therefore have been familiar to his German translator.[90] Namely, both Montfaucon and Banier proclaim the Sleep of Algardi in the Villa Borghese as antique, and a new vase, that stands near it with various others, is declared to be a vessel filled with a somniferous potion, just because Montfaucon found it placed beside it on an engraving. This Sleep of Algardi itself, however exquisite the workmanship may be, is quite at variance with the simplicity and the dignity of the ancients. Its position and gesture are borrowed from the position and gesture of the sleeping Faun in the Palazzo Barberini, to which I have referred above.

Nowhere have I met with an author on this branch of knowledge, who has not either left the image of Death, as it existed amongst the ancients, totally undecided or has it incorrectly. Even those who were familiar with the monuments which I have named, or with others like them, have not therefore approached much nearer the truth.

Thus Tollius knew that various old marbles were extant, on which boys with reversed torches represented the eternal sleep of the dead.[91] But is this to recognise in one

[89] Erläuterung der Götterlehre, vol. iv. p. 147, German trans.
[90] Preface to Geschichte der Kunst, p. 15. [91] In notis ad Roudelli Expositionem, S. T. p. 292.

of them Death himself? Did he therefore comprehend that the deity of Death was never represented in another form by the ancients? It is a long step from the symbolical signs of an idea, to the well-defined establishment of this idea personified, and reverenced as an independent being.

Just the same may be said of Gori. Gori most expressly names two such winged boys on old sarcophagi "Genios Somnum et Mortem referentes,"[92] but this very "referentes" betrays him. And since at another place[93] he speaks of these as "Genii Mortem et Funus designantes"; since elsewhere, notwithstanding the meaning of Death which he grants to Buonarotti, he still sees in one a *Cupido*, since, as we have seen, he recognises the skeletons on old stones as *Mortes;* it is almost pretty well unquestionable that he was at least very undecided in himself concerning these matters.

The same holds good for Count Maffei. For although he held that the two winged boys with reversed torches seen on old monuments were meant for Sleep and Death, yet he declared such a boy, who stands on the well-known "Conclamation marble" in the Saloon of Antiquities at Paris, to be neither the one nor the other, but a genius, who shows by his reversed torch that the deceased person indicated died in the flower of youth, and that Amor and his kingdom mourn this death.[94] Even when Dom Martin bitterly controverted this first error, and incorporated the same marble in his Museum Veronese, he makes no attempt at its clearer identification, and leaves the figures on the 139th plate, which he could have used for this purpose, without any explanation.

But this Dom Martin scarcely deserved to be confuted. He would have the two genii with reversed torches found on ancient monuments and urns, to be held as the genii of the man and of his wife or for the united guardian spirits whom, according to some of the ancients, every one possessed.

He might and should have known, that at least one of

[92] Inscript. ant. quæ in Etruriæ urbibus exstant, parte iii. p. xciii.
[93] *Ibid.* p. lxxxi.
[94] Explic. de divers Monuments singuliers qui ont rapport à la Religion des plus anciens peuples, par le R. P. Dom **, p. 36.

these figures, in consequence of the express ancient superscription, must needs be Sleep, and just now I luckily hit upon a passage in Winckelmann in which he has already censured the ignorance of this Frenchman.

Winckelmann writes: "It occurs to me that another Frenchman, Martin, a man who could dare to say Grotius had not understood the Septuagint, announces with boldness and decision that the two genii on the ancient urns cannot be Sleep and Death, and yet the altar on which they figure in this sense with the antique superscription of Sleep and Death, is publicly exhibited in the courtyard of the Palazzo Albani." I ought to have recalled this passage above (p. 182), for Winckelmann here means the same marble which I have there adduced from his Essay on Allegory. What was not so clearly expressed there, is the clearer here; not only the one genius, but also the other, are by the ancient inscription literally designated, on this Albani monument, as what they are; namely Sleep and Death. How much I wish that I could set a final seal upon this investigation by this announcement!

Yet a word about Spence ere I close. Spence, who most positively desires to force upon us a skeleton as the antique image of Death, Spence opines, that the ordinary representations of Death among the ancients, could not well have been other than terrible and ghastly, because the ancients generally entertained far darker and sadder conceptions of his nature than we could now admit.[95]

Yet it is certain that that religion which first discovered to man that even natural death was the fruit and the wages of sin, must have infinitely increased the terrors of death. There have been sages who have held life to be a punishment, but to deem death a punishment, could not of itself have occurred to the brain of a man who only used his reason, without revelation.

From this point of view it would presumably be our religion which has banished the ancient cheerful image of Death out of the domains of art. Since however this religion did not wish to reveal this terrible truth to drive us to despair; since it too assures us that the death of the

[95] Polymetis, p. 262.

righteous cannot be other than gentle and restoring; I do not see what should prevent our artists from banishing the terrible skeletons, and again taking possession of that other better image. Even Scripture speaks of an angel of Death; and what artist would not rather mould an angel than a skeleton?

Only misunderstood religion can estrange us from beauty, and it is a token that religion is true, and rightly understood, if it everywhere leads us back to the beautiful.

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